Daily Report

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Syrian Claims Israel Trying To Abort Peace Process

PM2402160594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Feb 94 p 5

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani report:"Syria Accuses Israel of Pulling Out of Peace Formula"]

[Text] Damascus—Diplomatic sources in Damascus said yesterday that urgent high-level contacts have been held over the past two days between Damascus and Washington to give a new impetus to the peace negotiations in Washington, especially as the United States has managed to stop the security deterioration witnessed recently in southern Lebanon as a result of the Israeli military escalation, which threatened a large-scale military operation.

The diplomatic sources said that Washington stressed to Damascus that it had sought to calm the situation in the south in order to prepare the atmosphere for new efforts to be made by it to secure better conditions for the negotiations' success so that they can produce tangible results.

The sources added that Washington reemphasized to Syria its determination to push the peace process forward, whatever the obstacles obstructing it. It also emphasized that prospects for achieving peace still exist and that it needs to make further contacts to secure an atmosphere of trust among the parties. According to the sources, Washington reemphasized that the U.S. Administration will not allow the negotiations to fail and that it will work to create the atmosphere needed to achieve progress that serves the peace process with its real foundations.

The sources said that achieving peace and securing a kind of trust among the parties requires time and hard work.

The situation in southern Lebanon is still shrouded in anticipation and caution. No significant development had been recorded until midday yesterday. Lebanese sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the Syrian-Lebanese meetings held at summit level and other levels stressed the resistance's right to exercise its role against the occupation.

Meanwhile, a Syrian official has accused Israel of continuing to seek to abort the peace process and thwart the round of negotiations currently being held in Washington. The official told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that, instead of withdrawing completely from the occupied territories, Israel has begun to pull out of the comprehensive peace formula. This is why it has since the launch of the negotiations been practicing various forms of provocations and methods to obstruct these negotiations and evade all commitments.

The official added: "Israel has begun to play numerous tunes: The Arabs have not ended the economic boycott, opened the borders, or established diplomatic relations; Syria does not want peace; and Lebanon has not halted resistance operations. The aim of all these pretexts is to obstruct all the efforts exerted to lead the peace process to its objectives, as though the Arabs must offer measures of trust to Israel."

The Syrian official went on to say that Israel is actually looking for pretexts to abort the present peace process and is planning to conduct separate contacts to secure separate agreements in order to impose its conditions on the Arabs and obtain concessions from them. It has shown this through its aggression and continued shelling of southern Lebanon.

Of course, that will not lead to any progress toward peace. The official stressed that "Syria participated in the negotiations after the U.S. assurances and commitment to the peace process, and after the world supported its elements. Syria has been patient with all Israeli maneuvers and procrastinations, but this patience cannot continue. And Syria is not going to beg for peace, nor will it accept the separate secret deals: Either a real peace or no peace at all. Syria cannot accept an incomplete Israeli peace. And Israel must realize very well that as long as the land is occupied and Arab rights usurped, it will never enjoy peace or security."

Four Issues Left for 'Arafat, Rabin To Resolve

NC2402184794 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Palestinian sources have stated that the Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, who concluded their talks in Cairo today on self-rule for the Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho, agreed to leave four topics relating to security and civilian services to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to solve.

The topics include Palestinian passports and postal stamps, the size of the Palestinian police force, and the area of Jericho to enjoy self-rule under the agreement. The same sources added that the Israelis refuse to take any step that may give the self-rule areas the form of a state, such as the issuing of passports and postal stamps.

PLO sources have noted that Israeli troops have begun to withdraw from some sites in Gaza and Jericho in preparation for the final withdrawal from the two regions. Five Palestinian police officers have arrived in Gaza and Jericho to discuss how the Palestinian police force will be deployed once the Israeli withdrawal is finalized.

Rabin Favors Tripartite Administration of Holy Sites

LD2402142394 Lisbon RDP Antena 1 Radio Network in Portuguese 1200 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] This is the last day of the Israeli prime minister's visit to Portugal. Today, he reiterated the idea of a Jerusalem united under Israeli control. For the old part of the city, at the center of the dispute, Rabin has proposed a tripartite administration. Miguel Moreira reports.

[Moreira] This morning Rabin spoke for more than an hour with Portuguese businessmen and tried to convince them that to invest in Israel could prove very beneficial. According to Rabin, peace is very close and the future is promising. The AIP [Portuguese Industrial Association] personnel answered by nodding their heads. They are willing to go forward with new deals in civil construction and textiles.

At this meeting, Rabin reiterated that the administration of the sacred part of the city of Jerusalem should be a tripartite one.

[Begin Rabin recording, in English with superimposed translation into Portuguese] We believe that one has to distinguish between the living city of Jerusalem and the holy city of Jerusalem for the three religions. We are committed to allow free access and free religious practice to the members of the Christian and Muslim religious communities. But it is more than that. The administration of religious shrines is not carried out by Israel; it is in the hands of the various churches. [end recording]

[Moreira] After the visit to the AIP, Rabin went to the Assembly of the Republic where he met [Assembly Speaker] Barbosa de Melo and a number of political leaders. At the moment, he is having lunch at Belem Palace with President Soares.

Sha'th Discusses Cairo Talks, 'Arafat-Rabin Meeting

JN2402122394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation to Cairo talks, by Sa'id Mu'addi; place and date note given; from the "With the Midday Events" program—recorded]

[Text] [Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, good evening.

[Sha'th] Good evening. You are welcome.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, hopes are rife that the negotiations will end before the blessed 'Id al-Fitr. Is what remains only time to draft the clauses of the agreement or are there other substantive issues?

[Sha'th] No substantive issues remain to hamper this agreement. Naturally, one always tries to confine his optimism to the framework of what is possible and realistic. Therefore, I cannot be absolutely certain, but can say we may conclude all these matters before 'Id al-Fitr, God willing.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, regarding the Israel Defense Forces' withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, has agreement been reached on dates?

[Sha'th] Agreement has been reached on the withdrawal plan and dates, but the first day of withdrawal depends on the day of signing. Consequently, it is an integrated timetable which lacks only the date of signing which will be the starting day of withdrawal.

[Mu'addi] What was agreed regarding the Palestinian police force? When will the vanguards of this force arrive in the Gaza Strip?

[Sha'th] Several officers will go there as of now to make the necessary preparations and contact the Israeli military commanders in Gaza in order to define the Palestinian police positions and what is required before the rest of the police forces arrive. Once the agreement is signed, the Palestinian police forces will begin to leave for the Strip and Jericho. They will do so before the Israeli withdrawal starts so that they will accurately learn all positions and needs on the ground. These forces will arrive in stages and gradually take up their positions prior to withdrawal. The withdrawal will then immediately commence from the positions, one at a time.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, you realize that the issue of releasing prisoners is the main preoccupation of the people on the street. What stage have you reached in this regard?

[Sha'th] This subject preoccupies us as well. I think there is a favorable Israeli response in this regard and a feeling of its importance for Palestinians and the coming peace and the start of a new stage of relations. Therefore, we are conducting these negotiations, in addition to all other activities, day by day. I think we got closer in some points and others need to be finalized. What is important is to agree to a timetable for the release of all prisoners, even if this timetable is spread over a period of time that includes withdrawal and completion of the agreement on the West Bank, too. We want all prisoners to eventually return home in peace. We want to see an end to this period so a new era of peace can begin.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, one last question. When do you expect a summit meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat?

[Sha'th] This, of course, depends on the day of signing. They might meet one or two days before the signing to discuss those issues left for them to finish. Therefore, if the signing is ready before 'Id al-Fitr, then the two leaders will meet before 'Id al-Fitr.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation to Cairo talks, thank you very much.

[Sha'th] Thank you and welcome.

Al-Tarifi Interviewed on Committee Meeting in Cairo

JN2302132894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 23 Feb 94

[Interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, head of the Palestinian side to the Palestinian-Israeli Civil Affairs Committee, by Sa'id Mu'addi, in Cairo, date not given; from the "With the Midday Events" program—recorded]

[Text] [Mu'addi] What stage has been reached in your discussion of the subject of transferring civil powers to the Palestinians?

[Al-Tarifi] In my opinion, diplomatic relations reached a very advanced stage. Yesterday, we concluded our discussion of the issue of agreement on the lands of both state and absentees. God willing, we will reach agreement on the issue of communications today. Two subjects, that is, organization and planning, and water, will be discussed next week. There is also the subject of jurisdictions, which is now being discussed in Paris as it is linked to the economic committee there.

[Mu'addi] Regarding the subject of visas, land registration, and water resources, has an understanding or agreement been reached on these topics?

[Al-Tarifi] Regarding visas, yes there is an agreement. The subject of water resources will be discussed next week, God willing.

[Mu'addi] Can we then say that next week will witness the end of negotiations within the framework of the Civilian Affairs Committee and that powers can be transferred to the Palestinians?

[Al-Tarifi] I hope so, God willing.

[Mu'addi] Has the Palestinian side made preparations and formed special cadres to take civil authority over from the civil administration?

[Al-Tarifi] In my opinion, and you know this, brother Sa'id, all present departments are currently run by Palestinians. Very few Israeli officials are present. We have qualified Palestinian cadres and we can assume power immediately.

Some Movement Reported at Paris Economic Talks

TA2502092294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In the Paris talks on the economic aspects of the peaceful relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, there has been some movement following a night-long session. Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said earlier he would not agree to endanger Israel's economy by giving in to the latest Palestinian demands. On the background leading to the deadlock, which focuses on the issue of customs, this report from Michel Zlotowsky in the French capital:

[Begin Zlotowsky recording] Sources close to the negotiators told Qol Yisra'el that everything that had been discussed during the five previous meetings now needs to be reassessed and rediscussed. We never said it would be fun and easy. It is difficult, it is complicated, and it will indeed take some time, said the sources.

It is clear now after the first meeting yesterday that the Palestinians did not buy the Israeli idea of a customs envelope, meaning that Israel and Gaza-Jericho would constitute one bloc for customs-related issues. In fact, the Palestinians did not have second thoughts, but something happened between the fifth and sixth round compelling them to review their position. This something, according to observers here, may well be the economic agreements signed with Egypt, and mainly with Jordan. Following King Husayn's stern warnings last month, a Palestinian delegation led by Faruq Qaddumi went to Amman and signed within two days a set of agreements at the beginning of January. Now the Palestinians seem to be tied by those agreements, preventing them from (?constituting) this one market proposed by Israel. How to break this deadlock is precisely what is being discussed. [end recording]

The talks are to resume next week. Finance Minister Shohat is returning home today.

Palestinian Affairs

WAFA Reports Deaths, Injuries in Hebron Mosque Attack

NC2502100094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0905 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—The Palestinian news agency WAFA, citing its own sources in Hebron, reports that the number of victims in the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron has risen to over 38 Palestinians. Over 300 Hebron citizens were injured.

The news agency added that the Palestinian settlers surprised the worshippers as they prayed, firing on them in one of the ugliest massacres since the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied.

Initial reports provide the following information: 18 martyrs in al-Ahli Hospital, 11 in 'Aliyah Hospital, three in al-Muhtasib Hospital, and five martyrs in al-Maqasid Hospital [figures as received].

PLO Issues Statement

NC2502102294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—The PLO is holding the Israeli Government responsible for the criminal and dangerous massacre committed by the armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian citizens while they were praying at the Hebron mosque at dawn this morning.

In a statement it issued this morning, the PLO asked the U.S. and Russian cosponsors of peace, the permanent and nonpermanent members of the Security Council, the European Union, the nonaligned countries, the Islamic countries, and all the international community to stop these dangerous crimes and massacres against the Palestinian people. In addition, it asked that international protection be provided immediately for the Palestinian people.

The PLO asked the masses of the Palestinian people to be careful and alert to these premeditated schemes, to confront them in united rank, and to consider the coming three days as days of mourning and general strike.

The statement notes that the Palestinian leadership will follow up the situation on all levels in order to confront all possibilities.

Hebron Imam Comments on Shooting

NC2502142294 Paris AFP in English 1346 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpt] Hebron, Occupied West Bank, Feb 25 (AFP)—The Imam who led the prayers at the Hebron mosque on Friday [25 February] described the scene as a "veritable bloodbath" as one or more Jewish settlers opened fire on the packed ranks of praying Muslims, killing more than 50 of them.

"At five-thirty, people began arriving to pray," Imam Ibrahim 'Abidin told AFP.

"There were a lot of soldiers around and Palestinian identities were checked," at the entrance to the Tomb of the Patriarchs which both Jews and Muslims hold holy as the burial place of Abraham, his sons and wives.

"During the first part of the prayer, suddenly shots were fired.

"It can only be a planned operation because there were a lot of settlers around the mosque," the imam said.

"The shots came from several directions. It was a veritable bloodbath."

Fifty-three Palestinians died and dozens more were wounded.

'Abidin accused the soldiers of being very slow to react and then of delaying the arrival of ambulances.

"Most people were hit in the head and chest," he added. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Says Israeli Army Responsible

JN2502073094 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0615 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, identified by nom de guerre Abu-'Ammar, in Tunis by unidentified Radio Monte Carlo correspondent in radio studio on 25 February—live or recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] President 'Arafat, good morning.

['Arafat] Good morning, brother.

[Reporter] President 'Arafat, what is your comment on the massacre?

['Arafat] I regret that this massacre has taken place. First of all, I do not absolve the Israeli Army of this responsibility, because everyone knows that the Israeli Army protects the entrances of the Ibrahimi Mosque and the area surrounding it. How, then, has it allowed armed settlers to enter the mosque while worshipers were performing dawn prayers? Therefore, there is some form of collusion. This has serious implications and meanings. Everyone must know that our people's blood is not spilt without a price, and that our people's blood is precious. To open fire on worshipers while they are performing dawn prayers at the Ibrahimi Mosque is an incident over which I cannot but call on the world at large, the cosponsors of the conference, the UN Security Council permament members and the other UN Security Council members, the EC, the Nonaligned countries, and the Arab and Islamic countries to shoulder their responsibility. I specifically call on the cosponsors of the conference which signed the peace agreement with us. What peace are they speaking about while crimes against our people continue and while fire is opened on our worshipers, children, and women? What peace are they speaking about?

[Reporter] President 'Arafat, what steps does the PLO intend to take in the occupied territories in wake of the massacre. What do you have to say to the Palestinians in the occupied territories?

['Arafat] All morning, I have been contacting officials in many friendly countries to apprise them of the situation. Even in America, I contacted them, through some brothers, to inform them so they may assume their responsibilities, including the cosponsors of the conference. At the same time, we asked our representative at the United Nations to call for an urgent UN Security Council session so it can take appropriate measures to protect our people, children, women, worshipers, mosques, and holy places which are being violated day and night.

[Reporter] President 'Arafat, what impact will this have on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations?

['Arafat] It will have very serious dimensions not only on the negotiations, but on all levels and in all directions.

[Reporter] One last question, President 'Arafat. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced at the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday that the United States has to continue its confrontation of the enemies of the peace process. Christopher said that you, that President Yasir 'Arafat is

not an enemy of peace, and that he is cooperating with Israel to end violence, as he said. What do you have to say to the U.S. secretary of state's statement?

['Arafat] Well, I would like now to see what stand he will adopt on these armed settlers. From where have they received weapons, and how are they permitted to carry arms while our people are not permitted to do the same? How can he allow the collusion that took place between the settlers and the Israeli Army? I would like to ask him too about the U.S. stand, given that the United States is one of the sponsors of the conference, and a signatory of the peace agreement, an agreement we signed at the White House under the auspices of President Clinton?

[Reporter] President 'Arafat, a thousand thanks.

['Arafat] What about the stand of the entire world, not only the cosponsors of the conference? What is the stand of the European countries, the Nonaligned countries, the Islamic countries, and the Arab countries? This is a crime which cannot be treated lightly.

[Reporter] President 'Arafat, thank you. We will contact you later during our next newscasts. Many thanks.

['Arafat] Thank you.

Urges 'Decisive Stance'

NC2502093394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0855 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has called for an urgent meeting of the Palestinian leadership to adopt a decisive stance toward Israel following the hideous massacre by Israeli settlers of Palestinian worshipers in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, which left 38 people dead and hundreds wounded.

During the meeting, to be held later today, the Palestinian leadership is expected to define the PLO stance on continuing the peace negotiations on every level, in light of the Israeli terrorist actions against the Palestinian people, which are the result of Israel's continuing intransigence and failure to implement the Declaration of Principles Agreement and withdraw from Gaza and Jericho.

President 'Arafat telephoned Nasir al-Qidrah, the chief Palestinian observer at the United Nations, and asked him to submit an urgent memorandum to the UN Security Council on the hideous massacre, which contravenes every international agreement and custom, and to call for an emergency Security Council meeting to discuss it.

Palestinian Leaders Comments on Hebron Mosque Attack

Qaddumi Condemns Rabin

NC2502130094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1230 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—Faruq Qaddumi, the head of the PLO Political Department, has condemned the Israeli massacre today in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

He said the world today is witnessing a new cycle in a series of Israeli crimes inside the occupied territories at a time when Rabin is taking no action. Instead, he encourages such massacres by not punishing the perpetrators.

In a statement today, Qaddumi said that Rabin uses the pretext of protecting Israeli security to postpone the date of the withdrawal of his military forces from the occupied Palestinian territories. He allows no international force to enter the occupied territories to end the abuse by the Israeli settlers, which threatens the chances of peace and security in the region and prolongs the struggle.

He noted that Yitzhaq Rabin, who insists on Israeli security, talks cold-bloodedly about these fierce and heinous massacres.

'Abd-Rabbuh: Incident 'Very Grave'

JN2502070094 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0610 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpts] At dawn today, there was a massacre in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron. The Israeli version says that an Israeli settler opened fire on a group of worshipers at the Tomb of the Prophet Abraham, killing 13 and wounding many others. [passage omitted]

The PLO gives a different casualty toll for the massacre. PLO Information Head Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh has told our radio that more than one settler carried out the attack. [passage omitted]

[Begin 'Abd-Rabbuh recording] The crime that took place at dawn today, and which was carried out by groups of settlers against the sons of the Palestinian people and the worshipers in the blessed Ibrahimi Mosque, martyred more than 30 Palestinians and wounded 150 others. The crime took place under the eyes, ears, and supervision of the Israeli occupation army.

The Rabin government and the occupation army are completely responsible for this crime. No peace can be achieved on Palestinian land as long as a single settler remains on it. These are criminal gangs, and they are one of the tools of occupation, and they must leave Palestinian land with the end of the occupation.

The PLO views this crime as a very grave turning point. Complete protection for our people should be guaranteed. Such protection can never be provided by this

occupation, and by the army of occupation—one of the tools of killings as we have seen over the past two days in Abu-Dis and al-Ram. Therefore, to have an international presence to guarantee protection for our people is inevitable. The command will adopt several measures in the next few hours to ensure real security in light of these crimes and the serious threats our people experience.[end recording]

Further on 'Abd-Rabbuh Remarks

NC2502074994 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Israeli settlers have committed a massacre in Hebron, in the occupied territories, by firing at Palestinian worshippers inside a mosque. While the final casualty toll is still unknown, Palestinian sources reported a short while ago that 31 people were killed. PLO Executive Committee member Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said about 130 people were killed or wounded. Monte Carlo radio correspondent in the occupied territories reported that according to an initial count, 26 people were killed and more than 70 wounded. An Israeli Army spokesman said that only 10 Palestinians were killed when an Israeli settler opened fire at the worshipers inside the mosque.

Commenting on the massacre a short while ago, PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat said:

[Begin recording] I do not absolve the Israeli Army from responsibility, because it is known that the Israeli Army posts guards at and around the entrances to the Ibrahimi Mosque. How did it allow armed settlers to enter the mosque while people were performing the dawn prayers? There is some sort of collusion. This has serious implications.

Everyone must realize that the blood of our people is not without its price. The blood of our people is precious. These faithful worshippers were fired on while they were performing the dawn prayer at the Ibrahimi Mosque. I cannot but call on the entire world—the cosponsors of the [Madrid] conference, the permanent members and all other members of the UN Security Council, the EC, the nonaligned states, the Arab states, and the Islamic states—to shoulder their responsibility. I call in particular on the cosponsors of the conference, who signed the peace agreement with us. What kind of a peace is this they are talking about when crimes have not ceased against our people and the killing is continuing. [end recording]

Commenting on the massacre also, PLO Executive Committee member Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said:

[Begin recording] The Rabin government and the occupation army shoulder full responsibility for this crime. No peace can be achieved in the Palestinian territory as long as one settler remains on this land. These are criminal gangs and one of the tools of occupation. They must leave the Palestinian territory, with the occupation. The PLO regards this big crime as a very serious turning point. Complete protection for our people must be ensured, and this protection cannot be provided by the occupation forces. [end recording]

'Arafat Informs Adviser

TA2502062394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0538 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with Ahmad al-Tibi, political adviser to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, by Hayim Zissowitz—live]

[Text] [Zissowitz] You heard about the Hebron incident and discussed it with Yasir 'Arafat.

[Al-Tibi] Yes, he talked with me this morning.

[Zissowitz] He called you for details?

[Al-Tibi] In fact, he had more details than I. From what I know at this stage, between 20 and 25 people were killed. The 16 Dr. Tamimi talked about were those admitted to his hospital. Others were taken to different hospitals, and dozens were wounded, many more than Dr. Tamimi mentioned. A massacre occurred in the Cave of the Patriarchs.

[Zissowitz] From what you know, was one man responsible for the whole incident?

[Al-Tibi] According to what some of the worshipers say, it is still not certain if only one settler was responsible. From what is known, a settler entered the Cave of the Patriarchs and indiscriminately massacred people. He was apparently hit by a fire extinguisher, which was hurled at him in order to stop the shooting. There was also firing at different sites in Hebron near the Cave of the Patriarchs.

[Zissowitz] Are you saying that the same person went on a rampage, firing as he went along, or that when he fired in the cave others were shooting outside?

[Al-Tibi] I do not have definite information at this stage, and I want to be precise. I am not certain that one person was responsible for all the fatalities. At this stage, there are at least 20 to 25 fatalities and the number of casualties has reached more than 80.

[Zissowitz] Do you know to which hospitals they were taken?

[Al-Tibi] Yes, they were taken to Hebron hospital, al-Maqasid, and other hospitals. We view the rampage by Jewish settlers with great gravity. We think a stop should be put to them immediately and the law imposed on them once and for all. A curfew must be imposed on Qiryat Arba' and not the area where the massacre occurred, which is Hebron. Once and for all the Jewish population must be told that they cannot continuing going on rampages and massacring innocent people. Violence by either side—but now I am speaking with pain about massacred Palestinians—can definitely

endanger the atmosphere of conciliation we are working so hard to bring about for both peoples. The Israeli Government and Army have to use all legal measures to bring order among the settlers who shoot freely in order to massacre peaceful Palestinians during their Ramadan morning prayers.

[Zissowitz] Did 'Arafat call on you to make those remarks or to pass on some message to the prime minister?

[Al-Tibi] I do not want to say what contacts I had this morning. I have said what I can at this stage.

Abu-Sharif Blames Israeli Government

TA2502095494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0905 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Report by Eldad Beck]

[Text] Bassam Abu-Sharif, one of Yasir 'Arafat's advisers, has placed the blame for the Hebron massacre on the Israeli Government. He says that this morning's incidents reinforce the PLO's demand for international supervision to guarantee the safety and well-being of the Palestinian residents of the territories. Abu-Sharif was asked to comment on the Israeli argument that the massacre was committed by a mentally ill person. The following is his reaction.

[Begin Abu-Sharif recording, in English] Well, we have seen such statements before. When the intifadah began, an Israeli soldier stopped a bus with 60 Palestinian workers on it and machine-gunned them. That is an old story. Actually, the Israeli Government is responsible, whether this man is unbalanced or balanced. I think he is balanced. He is an extremist, and the more the Israelis maneuver around and linger in implementing the agreement that was signed in Washington, the more ground they give to their extremists. [end recording]

Al-Husayni, Abu-Zayyad Comment

TA2502084694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0720 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interviews with Palestinian leaders Faysal al-Husayni and Ziyad Abu-Zayyad by Hayim Zissowitz; place not given—live]

[Text] [Zissowitz] I assume that you have been updated on what happened in Hebron. I have received reports from people in Hebron.

[Al-Husayni] Yes.

[Zissowitz] From the information you have, how many have been murdered, and how many wounded in the shooting spree.

[Al-Husayni] About 35 people were murdered. There are 18 dead in al-Ahali Hospital, 11 in 'Aliya Hospital, and four in al-Maqasid, and we are being updated by the minute.

[Zissowitz] Have the Palestinian negotiators in the peace talks worked out any response to this action?

[Al-Husayni] Of course, but first of all we want the settlers to be disarmed. Second, we want international protection and a committee to investigate what happened, who is responsible, and how the Army responded.

[Zissowitz] Do you doubt that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] did all it could to defend the Arab worshipers?

[Al-Husayni] No, definitely not. The Army permitted a settler to enter a holy place with weapons and do what he did. It is clear that the Army did not do what it had to do. Later, the Army fired at people, apparently causing many casualties. I also have reports that the Army later killed two people.

[Zissowitz] I am sure you do not deny that the Army is doing everything it can to defend the lives of Jews, yet it does not always succeed, and Arab terrorists succeed in harming and killing Jews.

[Al-Husayni] It has never happened in a place under such heavy Army protection. It has to defend such a holy place yet it permits settlers to enter armed. What we want is for all settlers be immediately disarmed.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0750 GMT on 25 February carries a similar interview with al-Husayni by Itay Engel, in which al-Husayni is asked whether he joins the call to Palestinians not to carry out reprisals for the Hebron incident. Al-Husayni replies: "Today, I call on the people not to make reprisals, but at the same time, I can not ask people not to defend themselves."]

[Zissowitz] Did you have any contact after this morning's events with the prime minister or foreign minister?

[Al-Husayni] I did not speak with the prime minister or the foreign minister. I tried but failed, but I talked with others in the government.

[Zissowitz] What did they tell you?

[Al-Husayni] I want to transfer the conversation to Mr. Ziyad Abu-Zayyad.

[Zissowitz] I asked Mr. al-Husayni whether you had any contact with Israel's top political echelon, the prime minister, foreign minister, or those participating in the talks?

[Abu-Zayyad] We are in touch with cabinet ministers, whom I do not want to name, Knesset members, officials in the Civil Administration, and the coordinator of government activities in the territories. We demanded information and an investigation, and we are following events with deep concern.

[Zissowitz] Do you think these events will influence the talks with Israel in any way?

[Abu-Zayyad] Personally, I hope not although it is a crime and a great tragedy. I hope it will not harm the

process because the peace talks are a strategic aim for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. We must not allow an incident, no matter how painful and dastardly, to stop the talks.

[Zissowitz] When you hear a unanimous denunciation by the left and right, does this convince you of its sincerity?

[Abu-Zayyad] I have always said that there is no denunciation that can bring a dead man back to life. Therefore it does not help. What can help is to immediately remove the arms from the settlers and to ban them from carrying arms, for the Army to be in control of the situation. It is responsible for the safety of the Jewish and Palestinian populations.

[Zissowitz] There were denunciations not only by people supporting the peace process, but a unanimous denunciation among those fervently opposed to the process, which is unusual.

[Abu-Zayyad] I am not looking for lip service from anybody and the words do not always reflect what the heart feels and desires, therefore I cannot depend on words.

Al-Tibi Wants International Protection

JN2502131794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, adviser to PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat on Israeli Affairs, by Qol Yisra'el correspondent Ziyad Halabi; place not given—live or recorded]

[Text] [Halabi] Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, PLO Executive Committee chairman's adviser, you spoke with Yasir 'Arafat on the phone this morning about the mass killings in Hebron. Was Yasir 'Arafat aware of the details, and what is the PLO's official reaction?

[Al-Tibi] Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] briefed me on the details this morning. He is in contact with the relatives of the victims in Hebron, and he has been informed about the details and the massacre that took place at Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. After the telephone call, I spoke with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. We are watching the situation, and visiting our wounded in the hospitals. This is an odious and vile crime carried out by a settler, whom they say is a doctor from Qiryat Arba'. We cannot accept the story that he is a psychopath, as some try to portray him to us.

[Halabi] Dr. al-Tibi, in your opinion what is the solution?

[Al-Tibi] The solution is to immediately disarm these settlers. If the Israeli Army and police, who supposedly are responsible for security, cannot provide security to the citizen who carries out his daily activities and prayers, then the United Nations can do this. The solution is to expedite the withdrawal of the Israeli Army. The solution is to disarm the settlers. The solution lies in international protection, because it has been proven that the Israeli Army cannot protect defenseless Palestinians. Some of the Palestinians who were martyred today were martyred by the bullets of the Israeli Army. This is the climax. It does not suffice that a settler opens fire in an indiscriminate manner, resulting in a massacre in the Ibrahimi Mosque, but the Armed forces too, instead of protecting the Palestinians, opened fire and killed at least four Palestinians. What is needed is international protection for the defenseless Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories.

[Halabi] Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, has PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat told you to convey any message to Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and the Israeli Government in this respect?

[Al-Tibi] As I told you, I spoke with whom I should speak at the highest level within the Israeli Government. They know the PLO's stand and demands, not to mention that President 'Arafat has called for the need to have international protection. There could be a need to convene the UN Security Council.

[Halabi] Dr. al-Tibi, in your opinion what impact will this painful incident have on the Palestinians in general?

[Al-Tibi] The Palestinians have been suffering and have expressed doubts during the past week. But, today, the pain is general, and sorron overwhelms all the occupied Palestinian territories, inside and outside the Green Line. Mourning has been announced, as you know. The Palestinians must feel that there is some change. As yet, the Palestinian citizen has not sensed that changes have taken place on the ground. On the contrary, things are getting worse. We tirelessly work to expedite the conclusion of the peace agreement so such crimes by the settlers cannot take place and to end the tribulations of the two people, the Palestinian and Israeli people.

[Halabi] Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, thank you.

[Al-Tibi] Thank you.

PNC Official Holds Rabin Responsible

NC2502114494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1050 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—Muhammad Subayh, secretary of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has condemned the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and asserted that it is not the only massacre committed by the fanatic settlers and rightist Israeli forces against the Palestinians.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, he added that the massacre was carried out with the cooperation and oversight of the Israeli Army. This constitutes a dangerous turning point in the peace process. At a time when Israel has been trying through the negotiations to get control of the crossings, under the pretext of security, it

leaves the occupied territories flooded with arms, especially in the hands of the obsessed settlers. This constitutes an abnormal danger for the march to peace.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who does not want to respect the dates [for implementing the agreements with the Palestinians], does not consider them sacred, and is in no hurry to implement the peace process either in letter or spirit, is opening up opportunities to such murderers to commit such ugly crimes.

He added that this heinous massacre affirms once again the importance of moving the settlements, which were established through aggression and against the legitimate international resolutions and international law.

He insisted that the responsibility for this massacre falls on the shoulders of the Israeli cabinet and its prime minister, Yitzhaq Rabin. They are also responsible for preventing repetitions of similar acts and for punishing the murderers and stopping them from committing further such crimes.

Knesset Member Comments

NC2502145094 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1255 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with Israeli Knesset member 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Darawshah by Muhammad Husayn in Cairo on 25 February; al-Darawshah's location not given; from "The World Around Us" program on 25 February—recorded]

[Text] [Husayn] What do you think about the incident in Hebron earlier today and its effects on the peace process?

[Al-Darawshah] The incident is tragic. Around 40 of our Palestinian sons were martyred in Hebron and adjacent areas. This incident, which was planned and was carried out by the extremist settlers, is chiefly aimed at torpedoing the peace process and at killing the largest number of our Palestinian people. This is a tragedy. The Israeli Government is responsible for this incident. The settlers are also responsible. I believe the consequences will be grave.

I contacted Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin twice today and asked him to withdraw the army from Hebron and the Palestinian towns and to guarantee that the settlers do not enter the Palestinian areas. I also asked him to disarm the settlers, the thugs, who attack the Palestinians. Regrettably, the killings@are continuing. The martyrs who fell in these past few hours were not killed by settlers' guns but by the army forces.

[Husayn] What was Yitzhaq Rabin's response?

[Al-Darawshah] Rabin said he was studying the issue and that he is in constant contact with the army. He said he instructed the army not to shoot to kill. But this response is not sufficient, because, regrettably, the killings are continuing. A curfew has been declared in Hebron and the adjacent area. But this is not normal, because the Palestinian people are entitled to demonstrate and to express their sorrow and pain for the incident. That is something natural. This is what I told Rabin during my discussion with him. I told him the Palestinian people have the right to demonstrate and to voice their anger and extreme pain. He must withdraw the army from the towns.

PLO Lisbon Envoy Wants Settlers Out

LD2502111894 Lisbon Radio Renascenca in Portuguese to Europe 0900 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpt] The toll of this morning's massacre in the West Bank has already risen to 49. [passage omitted] Yasir 'Arafat has requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council. In Lisbon, PLO representative 'Isam al-Baysusu has echoed 'Arafat's stance and said that responsibility for the massacre must be apportioned in full to the Israeli state:

[Begin al-Baysusu recording] This is the Israeli Government's problem. Whether or not it was perpetrated by a fanatic, as far as we are concerned this was a crime, a massacre, and the responsibility lies fully at the Israeli Government's door, because it is the Israeli Government that sets up Israeli settlements on Palestinian territories. [end recording] [passage omitted]

[Lisbon RDP Antena 1 Radio Network in Portuguese in a similar report at 0900 GMT on 25 February carries the following recording remarks by al-Baysusu: "The peace negotiations are really in danger, because we agreed to postpone negotiating on the problem of the Israeli settlements for two years, and now this means that we must discuss the problem of the settlements immediately. They must all leave Palestine."]

Fatah Representative Condemns Shooting

NC2502085694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—Zuhdi al-Qidrah, the Fatah representative in Cairo, has condemned the shooting early this morning of Palestinians praying at Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron City in the occupied West Bank. He considers this shooting incident a violation of the spirit of peace that we are working to realize in the region.

In a statement to MENA today, the Palestinian official asked the Israeli Government to stop these acts the Israeli settlers are committing.

He affirmed that these acts compel the international community to shoulder its responsibility in the march to peace by providing the Palestinian people inside the occupied territories with international protection until Israel withdraws from the Palestinian territories.

Hamas, PFLP-GC Leaders Comment on Hebron Attack

Jibril: 'Revenge Will Be Devastating'

JN2502133494 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1117 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In a statement to Al-Quds radio following the odious Zionist crime, Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General command [PFLP-GC], has said the following: We are not surprised that the Zionists committed such a massacre in the blessed Ibrahimi Mosque, the mosque of our Lord Abraham, the father of prophets and messengers. The Zionists' history is replete with terrorism and massacres against our people and nation, and against mankind. Had they not already committed the massacre at Al-Aqsa, and before that others in Sabra and Shatila and in Dayr Yasin, Qibyah and Nahalin, and Kafr Qasim? Have they not committed massacres against the people in southern Lebanon and the Golan?

Ahmad Jibril added: These Jews have been marked by God Almighty in the Koran as the killers of prophets and messengers, and as those who violate the pledges they make although God has given them many opportunties to repent. They insist, however, on continuing their actions, which shows complete disobedience to God, his teachings, and to mankind.

In his statement to Al-Quds radio, Ahmad Jibril added: As I said, we are not surprised at the perpetration of such a massacre in one of God's houses. What surprises us, however, is that Yasir 'Arafat and a handful of mercenaries continue to shake hands with the killers in Oslo, Washington, and Cairo. We are surprised that they continue to offer concessions and to give in completely to the Zionist will. We are also surprised at some Arab leaders who act out the role of cheap brokers for the sake of the Zionist movement. We are surprised at the behavior of some Arab rulers who started to open their countries to the Zionist movement and to the Jews while the Zionists still occupy all of Palestine, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon.

Ahmad Jibril said: We are certain that the people's will, our Arab people, and nation will punish all those who relinquish the holy places, the land, and history. Our Palestinian people in and outside [the occupied territories] will not forgive these massacres that are being committed against them, massacres which will remain vivid in our minds, and in the minds of our children, and grandchildren. Our revenge will be devastating, God willing. We are the nation of martyrs and martyrdom, and we do not fear death. This odious massacre will further enhance the cohesion and determination of our people and nation and their faith in the inevitability of victory. In conclusion, we offer condolences to our Palestinian people in the occupied territories and to the martyrs families and we tell them that tomorrow is close for those who are waiting.

Ghawshah Blames Rabin Government

NC2502125094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1202 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee member Samir Ghawshah has declared that the PLO holds the Israeli Government under Yitzhaq Rabin's leadership responsible for the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque at dawn today. He accused it of failing to put an end to the violence, killings, and highway assaults that the settlers have been perpetrating for the past several months.

In a statement to MENA's Tunis correspondent, Ghawshah said the Palestinian leaders will hold an urgent meeting later today to discuss the massacre and adopt appropriate decisions in light of the reactions that will proceed from the international community and the UN Security Council, particularly the United States and Russia in their capacity as the sponsors of the Middle East peace process.

Ghawshah added: We will discuss the situation and adopt a firm stand, not only with regard to the negotiations but also on how to confront these dangers and prevent their recurrence.

He stressed that this massacre is directed at the peace operation and at the negotiations, which the perpetratods want to undermine.

Ghawshah urged Rabin's government to arrest the culprits and punish them, promptly implement the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, and withdraw the Israeli forces from Gaza and Jericho. He assured that when the PLO assumes responsibility and authority in these areas, these assaults will stop.

He called on the world community to help end these acts and urged Washington and Moscow—the sponsors of the peace process—to make Israel fulfill its obligations and play its role in giving impetus to the peace process.

He said: While we condemn this massacre against our Palestinian people at the hands of Israeli settlers, we emphasize the need for all patriotic Palestinian forces to unite and confront these brutal actions that seek to undermine the peace process.

More on Ghawshah, Jibril Remarks

LD2502113794 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Two Palestinian leaders condemned this morning's Zionist crime, during an interview with the Central News Unit in Beirut. They called on the international community to take serious action over the Zionist regime's continuous creation of catastrophes. In this connection, and in a telephone interview with us, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah said:

[Begin Ghawshah recording, in Arabic with superimposed Persian translation] Such a crime reflects the true criminal nature of Rabin and the Zionist regime. The Palestinian community will continue to walk on the path of martyrdom and struggle until the full liberation of the occupied territories. [end recording]

Ahmad Jibril, general secretary of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command [PFLP-GC], also spoke to us in an interview. He emphasized: The ugly crime at the mosque of his holiness Abraham, peace be upon him, today in the holy month of Ramadan reflects the height of savageness and terrorism by the Zionist regime and adds a bleak page to their ugly record alongside the Sabra-Shatila [massacre in September 1982]. He continued: We know the true nature of Zionism, and on this bleak day we say: Has not the time come for the Islamic and Arab world to stand up to rescue the Palestinian people and support them in their struggle against the Zionists and America?

Hamas Official Vows To Avenge

JN2502111094 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1000 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Report by Sana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[Text] Abu-'Ali Mustafa, assistant secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], has stated that the massacre settlers committed today in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque is one of the fruits of the so-called peace. He told Radio Monte Carlo that a crime of such a nature cannot take place without the knowledge of the Israeli Army and the Israeli security organs which directly encourage the settlers and cover up their fascist actions against the Palestinians.

Abu-'Ali Mustafa said this massacre is further proof that the Gaza-Jericho agreement legalizes settlement, protects the settlers, and perpetuates the occupation. He said the PLO leadership's official stand, which overlooks the issue of ending settlement, is responsible for the settlers' crimes against the Palestinian people.

The PFLP assistant secretary general called on the United Nations and the human rights bodies to act immediately to protect the Palestinian people under occupation.

Meanwhile, Abu-Muhammad Mustafa, director of the Hamas office in Damascus, has said this massacre is a message—signed in blood—and one which confirms that peace with those terrorists is an illusion. He stressed that the terrorists, with the help of the Israeli soldiers who claim to protect the Ibrahimi Mosque, who attack in their mosques those who fast, have given a slap in the face to the defeatists in Tunis who daily negotiate and offer concessions.

The director of the Hamas office in Damascus emphasized that this crime will not go unpunished, and that the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Battalions will avenge this massacre as they avenged al-Aqsah massacre.

Hamas on 'State of Alert'

NC2502142894 Paris AFP in English 1330 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Amman, Feb 25 (AFP)—The hardline fundamentalist group Hamas vowed on Friday [25 February] to attack Israeli soldiers, settlers and other Jewish targets in revenge for the massacre of more than 50 Palestinians at a mosque in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The Islamic Resistance Movement put all its militants "on a maximum state of alert" and called on them "to retaliate as hard as possible to avenge the slaughter in Hebron."

In a statement to AFP here, Hamas said that "emergency military plans were put in place to strike at Zionist targets, occupation soldiers and settlers."

It also declared that the massacre had dealt a "fatal blow" to the peace process.

Hamas has been at the forefront of attacks on Jews in the occupied territories since the PLO signed its peace deal with Israel in Washington in September.

PFLP, DFLP Promise To Seek Revenge

JN2502083594 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0802 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In an initial reaction, the joint command of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] has strongly condemned today's ugly crime at Ibrahimi Mosque in which many defenseless Palestinian citizens were killed by the armed gangs of settlers under the very eyes and ears of the occupation forces.

In the name of the Red Star and Red Eagle Battalions and on behalf of the militant nationalist forces, the joint command pledged to the martyrs and the Palestinian people in the occupied territores to take revenge on the occupation and the settlers.

The two fronts appealed to the international community to act immediately to secure peace and protection for the Palestinian people under occupation, and called on the PLO command to learn from what is taking place in the occupied territories and to suspend the separate negotiations and the destructive partial deals which have catastrophic results on the Palestinian people.

The two fronts hold the Israeli Army responsible for this crime.

Dissident Palestinian Figure Blames 'Arafat

NC2502103194 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] The Palestinian popular committees went on a one-day strike in Sidon today and declared three days of mourning.

Lieutenant Colonel Munir al-Maqdah, a former Fatah military official who opposes the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, has stated that Yasir 'Arafat is to blame for the Hebron massacre because he signed the above agreement.

Al-Maqdah announced: Our retaliation to this massacre will be very cruel. We will use all available methods. Let no one, inside or outside the occupied territories, blame us.

Al-Maqdah called on 'Arafat not just to resign, because his resignation is no longer useful, but to take out his pistol and point it at his own head.

'Clandestine' Group Threatens To Kill 'Arafat, Jews

NC2502141294 Paris AFP in English 1356 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Beirut, Feb 25 (AFP)—A clandestine Muslim fundamentalist group on Friday [25 February] threatened to assassinate PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat, accusing him of responsibility for the Hebron massacre in which 58 Palestinians were shot dead.

"The traitor 'Arafat will not be the only one to pay the price over this massacre, Jews in their synagogues will also pay," the Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Palestine said in a statement received here by AFP.

The group, which is opposed to the PLO-Israeli autonomy accord signed last September, emerged several months ago. It said in an Arabic-written statement it would assume full responsibility for eliminating 'Arafat, adding that it had already judged him.

The Hebron massacre was the result of the "odious policies of the United States, and its allies, namely (Egyptian President) Husni Mubarak," the group said.

One or more settlers shot dead 58 Palestinians and wounded dozens more when they opened fire inside a mosque at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, which was packed for prayers during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Consequences of Attack on Peace Talks Examined

Fatah's al-Husayni Comments

NC2502105294 Paris AFP in English 1030 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Jerusalem, Feb 25 (AFP)—The Middle East peace process is dying, the PLO's West Bank chief Faysal al-Husayni warned Friday [25 February] after one or more Jewish settlers killed more than 50 Palestinians praying in a mosque.

"It is a day of sorrow not only for the Palestinian people but maybe also for the peace process," said al-Husayni, who front's Yasir 'Arafat's mainstream PLO group Fatah.

"When it reaches this level this means the peace process is dying.

"If the Israelis are not going to take real steps to stop the settlers and their activities in the area I believe they are killing the peace process," al-Husayni said.

He called for the Israeli government to disarm all settlers and demanded that an inquiry be set up immediately "to investigate not only who did it, but also what was the attitude of the army before and after the event."

The Tomb of the Patriarchs where the slaughter took place in Hebron is under military guard.

"I call for the government and Rabin to take real steps and not only words. Words will not be enough," al-Husayni said.

"If the Israeli government cannot take this responsibility then we have to take it ourselves.

"They have to create an atmosphere (in which) we can tell our people there is a peace process and they can wait, or else we cannot ask them to restrain themselves.

Peace Talks Delegation Member Comments

NC2502103494 Paris AFP in English 0934 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (AFP)—In Jerusalem, Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, a member of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, said the peace process must go on.

"Despite all the pain of this massacre I hope that it will not prevent the (peace) process because that is a strategic objective."

PLO leader on the West Bank Faysal al-Husayni called for an international inquiry into the killing.

"First of all we want the settlers to be disarmed, we want international protection and we an international committee of inquiry."

Hamas Spokesman: Attack 'Fatal Blow'

NC2502094394 Paris AFP in English 0924 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Amman, Feb 25 (AFP)—The "terrible massacre" of Palestinians in Hebron on Friday [25 February] has dealt a "fatal blow" to the peace process, Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah said here.

The shooting, in which at least 40 Palestinians died, will provoke a "dramatic escalation in the intifadah and shake the Palestinian people and the Arab nation out of their slumber."

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas has been at the forefront of attacks on Jews in the occupied territories since the PLO signed its peace deal with Israel in Washington in September.

The spokesman said his movement had always warned that "coexistence is impossible with the Israeli enemy which wants the land without its inhabitants."

Hamas Rejects Talks With Government

TA2402194394 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 24 Feb 94 p 5

[Text] Gaza—In a statement distributed yesterday morning in the Gaza Strip, Hamas rejected Rabin's attempts, carried out inside prisons and through Egyptian newspapers, to hold a dialogue with Hamas. The statement emphasized that those attempts were a natural outcome of the operations conducted by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam squads. In its statement, Hamas announced that as long as the occupation, the settlers, and their weapons, exist and as long as the prisoners remain in prison, Hamas and 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam will hold a dialogue with Rabin only through the bullet. The statement noted that Hamas will overcome all Israeli attempts to embarrass it, and that all the political maneuvers and trial balloons floated by the Israeli Government were doomed to failure.

The statement clarified the Hamas position on the agreement that has canceled the issues of Jerusalem and the refugees, negated Palestinian control, and allowed the Jews to build more settlements. The statement said Hamas will do all in its power to foil this plan by the permitted legitimate means, far from the violence being practiced by Rabin's government.

Commentary Warns Against Attempts To Weaken Nation

JN2302104394 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Brothers: As we proceed with firm steps and solid determination to achieve our national objectives, destroying all obstacles on the path of our march, we should be more alert, have an honest national awareness, and place Palestine—land and one people—over all considerations. The objective is to deprive the enemy of opportunities and to foil the seditions which the enemy is trying to create to undermine our national unity by pushing us toward despair and internecine fighting, God forbid.

O brothers: With the exacerbating political confrontation, the procrastination and prevarication by Israeli officials, and the escalating Israeli repressive acts against our steadfast Palestinian people in the occupied homeland, we must be fully aware that the enemy will not give in easily to the achievements accomplished by our people under the banner of their sole, legitimate leadership, the PLO. The enemy will lie in wait to attack and liquidate these achievements.

The Israeli enemy is endeavoring to evade all its pledges and commitments contained in the Declaration of Principles agreement. The evidence is its continuous attempts to [word indistinct] the Palestinian negotiator and to (?delay) withdrawal from the agreed areas and its desperate attempts to delay the release of Palestinian detainees from Israeli jails. This is in addition to its continuous procrastination in transferring powers to the national Palestinian authority in the areas from which it will withdraw under the pretext that all these issues need more discussion and more (?recommendations).

Hence, it is evident that the enemy is trying, through all this, to gain time and prepare the road for a new scheme which, this time, aims to create seditions and sow discord in front of the national Palestinian authority. The enemy wants to show that this authority is unable to tackle the situation and that it cannot run the affairs of the Palestinian people in the interim period. The objective is to entrench occupation as the best way to maintain security and stability in these areas.

As they have always proved, our people can—through their awareness, steadfastness, unity, and cohesion—make the designs of aggressors backfire. Those who try to encroach on our people's steadfastness and march toward liberation and independence must know full well that he who plays with fire will burn his fingers and that he who plants thorns will harvest storm.

Commentary Stresses Arab Right To Jerusalem

JN2402083594 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Feb 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Israel does everything it can to conceal the name of Jerusalem from the march [words indistinct] under the cover of darkness, and when the name of the city of peace surfaces, the Zionists' reality is exposed by their shouts and allegations that Jerusalem is Israeli and will remain the permanent capital of the State of Israel. Despite the frank international resolutions and the rejection of most countries, including the big powers, of the legitimacy of the decision to annex issued in June 1980 to annex Jerusalem, Israel continues to reject any discussion of the fate of the city of peace. It threatens to obstruct the whole peace process if this issue is raised. By this, Israel is exercising every kind of blackmail and Judaization.

All these methods cannot change any of official documents and treaties, despite Israel's control of the land, its daily Judaization measures, and its continued settlement

operations to change the face of the flower of cities. These documents stress something no one can ignore or hide from. No one has free disposal over Jerusalem or can relinquish any inch of its holy land. No leader, organization, or official alone can negotiate with the Israelis on the decided, irrevocable facts that Jerusalem is Arab and will remain Arab despite all intrigues and conspiracies. It is Islamic and contains the first of the two qiblas, the third of the holiest shrines, and many Islamic holy sites, the foremost of which are al-Aqsa Mosque, 'Umar Mosque, the holy Rock of the Dome, and the place from which the prophet ascended to the throne. It also contains Christian sanctities, including the Holy Sepulcher, but does not contain any Jewish sanctities, contrary to Zionist propaganda allegations.

Israel has pursued a well-studied strategy to reach its goals. It began by oppressing Arab residents by confiscating their land, arresting men, damaging the sanctities, demolishing houses, denying construction licenses, waging economic war, and imposing an unethical and inhuman siege on Arab Jerusalem to force its residents to leave it and hand it over to Zionist settlers as an easy morsel. As a result, the character of the old city changed. A series of settlements and brute-like colonies that distort the spiritual and aesthetic face of Jerusalem have been established.

The Israeli Government also insisted on separating Jerusalem residents from their brothers and families in the West Bank and Gaza. It prevented any citizen in Jerusalem from joining the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks. What is worse is the agreement the Israeli Government recently signed with the Vatican. This has provoked fear that this Catholic edifice may retreat from its resolute rejection of the annexation of Jerusalem and from its insistence on finding a solution ensuring everybody's rights, even through the internationalization of the whole holy city, as demanded by the former pope.

The Madrid peace formula suspended the issue of Jerusalem, in accordance with a U.S. demand to postpone complicated and difficult issues until after deciding matters and defining the concept of land for peace, namely, the concept of total peace and total withdrawal in accordance with international resolutions, foremost of which are Resolutions No. 242 and 338. Israel alleges and brags every day that Jerusalem is excepted from total peace and total withdrawal and that it will not sign any final agreement that stipulates a change of the present situation. Therefore, it has resorted to tricks, dividing the solution and demanding partial agreements with each side.

Despite all this, the Israelis know they have not been able to impose a fait accompli. Therefore, they are building more settlements, oppressing Jerusalem residents, and [words indistinct]. Some specialized gangs call for the destruction of al-Aqsa Mosque and building the Temple in its place. Despite these difficulties, Jerusalem's residents have proven their ability to defend the den of Arabs and Muslims and have asserted to the whole world that Jerusalem is Arab and will remain so forever. Its current ordeal is not the first. It was subjected to the crusaders' occupation and was liberated at the hand of victorious commander Salah al-Din al-'Ayyubi.

PLO Welcomes King Fahd's Campaign To Preserve Mosques

LD2402233794 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 2200 GMT 23 Feb 94

[Text] The Palestine Liberation Organization has welcomed the noble religious and humanitarian step by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the Servant of the Two Holy Places, and his permission to start a popular fund raising campaign at the level of all parts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to renovate the Islamic sacrosancts in holy Jerusalem, and save them from a deliberate destruction due to the occupation measures that are aimed at wiping out the Islamic and Arab character of Jerusalem.

To that end, His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz has issued an appeal through the various information media to the citizens and residents of the Kingdom, urging them to make effective and generous contributions to save holy Jerusalem.

Egypt

Musa Condemns Hebron Shooting, Calls for End To 'Extremism'

NC2502102794 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0930 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Egypt today strongly condemned the incident committed by an Israeli settler in Hebron in the occupied West Bank, which left scores of Palestinians dead. In a statement commenting on the incident, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said: Egypt affirms the need to confront the extremism that has hit numerous societies of different religions, politics, and traditions.

The foreign minister said that the incident confirms the importance of preserving Palestinian security and not just Israeli security. Therefore, calls for security are not restricted to Israel alone. He said that in light of the dangerous nature of and the signs given by the incident, Egypt will take part in any meetings the Security Council decides to hold in response to a request from Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

The foreign minister said the incident affirms the importance of the subject of Jerusalem and the need to put it on the agenda of the negotiations. The fate of Jerusalem cannot be abandoned to the behavior of extremists, criminals, or mad men.

Elsewhere, the PLO blamed the Israeli Government for the massacre committed by a Jewish settler against Palestinian citizens praying at the Hebron mosque this morning. The death toll from the massacre has risen to 45 martyrs, while four Palestinians were killed by the bullets of the Israeli occupation Army in Hebron during the violent clashes that erupted after the massacre.

Envoy: Hebron Event 'Raises Doubts' About Negotiations

NC2502101094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0915 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—The Palestinian ambassador to Egypt, Sa'id Kamal, has declared that the shooting of worshippers at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron at dawn today raises doubts about the usefulness of negotiating over the transitional period, which involves settlements and settlers as part of the agreement pertaining to it.

In a statement to MENA, Sa'id Kamal demanded that the Israeli Government immediately adopt a resolution removing the settlements and withdrawing the settlers so that the peace operation might follow its sound and natural course. He said he doubts the efficacy of negotiating under the circumstances.

Kamal explained that the Palestinian proposal to place the West Bank and Gaza under international protection has been proven sound.

Hasan 'Usfur, deputy chairman of the Security Affairs Committee in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on implementing autonomy in Gaza and Jericho, condemned themassacre. He stressed that the Israeli settlers' new crime reveals the inherent brutality of those who reside illegally in the occupied territories.

'Usfur added that their actions contradict the most obvious legal principles and offer new proof that the peace process is not an easy issue but is a complicated operation that requires extreme efforts to maintain it.

The Palestinian official remarked that the new crime illustrates to Rabin's government the danger that the continuing presence of the settlers poses for the peace process. He said that if Israel wants to preserve the peace process, it must first end the new barbarism of these people, who are no longer a danger to the Palestinians alone, but to the entire peace operation. They are thus a danger to Rabin's government.

'Usfur concluded his remarks by noting that this new criminal act demonstrates the Palestinian negotiators' sound logic when they considered the dangers represented by such people and told the Israeli negotiators that security is a mutual concern, not a demand made by one party.

Musa Calls on Yemeni Parties To Stop 'Tension'

NC2502112094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1013 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that there are Egyptian-Yemeni contacts currently taking place in an attempt to contain the stand and stop the fighting in Yemen.

In a statement he made today commenting on the current fighting in Yemen, Musa called on both sides of the conflict in Yemen to stop the tension between them and calm the situation down.

Islamic Group Seeking To Replace Dead Commander

NC2402153594 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 21 Feb 94 p 15

[Text] Following the death of Tharwat al-Hajjaj, commander of the military wing of the so-called al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah who was responsible for carrying out the operations in Egypt in coordination with the group's leaders abroad and its members in the governorates, the group and its fugitive and imprisoned leaders at home and abroad have had a problem finding a replacement for him.

Consultations are currently taking place among the group's leaders to choose one of the fugitive members to assume the post in Egypt. The candidate who has the best chances is Rif'at Zaydan, commander of the military wing in Asyut, who has been leading the terrorist operations there and was Tharwat al-Hajjaj's right-hand man in Asyut. He is considered the most capable among the group's members to assume the post after having managed to avoid being captured by the security forces in the past two years and to carry out all the terrorist operations with his group, which includes Ahmad Sanusi, 'Abd-al-Nabi Husayn, and Jamal 'Abd-al-Hamid.

Rif'at Zaydan is from Dayrut. He assumed the command of the military wing after Jamal Huraydi, commander of the Manshiyat Nasir massacre, was arrested and after Ahmad Zaki al-Sharif was killed in the Firyal Company incidents in Asyut.

Yemen

Military Official Says Fighting Settled

PM2402154394 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Feb 94 p 1

[Text] London, Sanaa, Aden—A south Yemen military source has said that the fighting with northern forces in Zinjibar, Mudiyah, and Lawdar in Abyan Governorate was settled at midday yesterday. And that troops of the al-'Amaliqah Brigade—who were wearing civilian clothes—fled, returning to their camp after they had deployed on two axes: One in Zinjibar (capital of Abyan) to cut off the road to Aden, and one in Lawdar to cut off the road to the governorates of Hadhramaut and Shabwah

President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, secretary general of the (northern) General People's Congress [GPC]—has issued his orders to Defense Minister Staff Brigadier General Haytham Qasim Tahir (a northerner) to return the al-Wahdah Brigade to Hadhramaut from Abyan. He told him in a message sent to him in Aden: "I oblige you to comply in order to pave the way and create favorable conditions for starting the implementation of the Pledge and Accord Document and to protect unity and democracy and spare the nation sedition and infighting."

The president blamed the defense minister and southern officials for the military movements, instructing the defense minister not to mobilize any force except after the approval of "the chief of staff (a northerner) and the supreme commander of the Armed Forces (the president)." A GPC source accused the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] of violating the rules of military movements and the military committee's decisions, namely by continuing to move the 30th Brigade from Shabwah to Abyan. But the defense minister considered the military committee's decision unilateral and decided to complete the process of moving the brigade.

Although there are no confirmed figures about the number of victims, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's information indicates that 700 to 800 have been killed or wounded. The information attributes these high figures to the nature of the guerrilla warfare dominating the operations and the sniper method used in the streets. Sources said that a force wearing civilian clothes comprising about three brigades from the militias belonging to the Yemeni Reform Grouping arrived in the area from the north and from al-Maraqishah camp to participate in the operations.

While southern sources said that they had arrested an Algerian extremist among these, they pointed out that their participation in the operations and the al-'Amaliqah troops' wearing of civilian clothes was designed to drive a wedge between the southern al-Wahdah Brigade and the people of the governorates, who are known for their support for former President 'Ali Nasir Muhammad. On the grounds that the al-Wahdah Brigade—which comprises northern elements from the former National Front elements—carried out reprisal operations in the wake of the 13 January 1986 incidents and prevented the occurrence of rapprochement between 'Ali Nasir and the present YSP leadership.

The sources added that a large-scale deployment has taken place over the past two days in the northern border governorates, including Ta'izz, al-Bayda', and Ma'rib, and also Ibb Governorate, which is situated in the region but considered to be belong to the YSP by virtue of its support for the National front in the period before unity.

Air traffic was banned over the al-'Amaliqah Brigade camp all day yesterday. Eyewitnesses said that the camp opened fire with light weapons at 0700 hrs on a southern Mig aircraft which had flown over it in a "provocative manner." But it failed to hit it because of the speed of the aircraft and the lack of high-capability antiaircraft weapons. But southern sources said that the aircraft which was fired on was an Ethiopian civilian plane.

Sources said that Colonel Muhammad Salah, Yemeni deputy chief of staff and head of the military committee, arrived in al-'Amaliqah camp yesterday for the second time in three days in a new attempt to contain the confrontation.

Military Statement Notes Jordanian, Omani Efforts

NC2402192394 Paris AFP in English 1701 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Sanaa, Feb 24 (AFP)—Jordanian and Omani military officials headed for Sanaa Thursday to help ensure compliance with a reconciliation agreement between Yemen's rival leaders, a military statement issued in the Yemeni capital said.

The officials would try to finalise a plan to reposition troops who have clashed repeatedly since the accord was signed in Amman Sunday, and ensure that the military and security aspects of the deal were properly implemented.

In Amman officials said 10 Jordanian military observers would travel to Yemen, accompanied by royal adviser Khalid al-Karaki.

The reconciliation accord, brokered by Jordan, called for constitutional reforms, an improvement of security and the withdrawal of military checkpoints from towns and cities.

It was signed by President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, a northerner, and his southern rival, Vice-President 'Ali Salim al-Bid, in the presence of King Husayn.

Oman, which borders on Yemen, also mediated between the two leaders, who have been in dispute since last August over al-Bid's refusal to take up his duties in Sanaa.

The armies of north and south have not merged since the country was unified in May 1990.

The military statement also said southern troops and militia belonging to al-Bid's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) Thursday ambushed northern troops of the al-'Amaliqah brigade outside a hospital in the troubled Abyan province, 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Aden.

At least 20 people are reported to have been killed in the province since clashes between the rival armies erupted Monday.

One northern soldier was wounded in the ambush Thursday, which occurred when northern troops went to reclaim the bodies of soldiers killed in the earlier clashes, the statement said.

It also denied a claim that northern troops were surrounding units based in 'Amran, 60 kilometers (35 miles) northwest of Sanaa.

Earlier an official in Sanaa said southern units were surrounded in 'Amran and Dhamar, 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of the capital.

"Tension is high in these regions, and there is a serious risk of an explosion," the official told AFP, declining to be named.

Meanwhile, a newspaper in al-Bid's stronghold, the southern port city of Aden, said Thursday southern Yemeni troops had captured several Arab veterans of the Afghanistan war during the clashes in Abyan province.

The veterans were fighting alongside northern troops, the newspaper October 14 said, but did not specify how many were captured nor their nationality.

It said the veterans, who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, were supported by the powerful fundamentalist movement al-Islah, and were trained in a "terrorist camp" on al-Marakishah mountain, in the north of the province.

They were financed by a rich Saudi businessman, Usamah Bin-Ladin, based in Khartoum," the paper said, and were "supported by officials in the Sanaa administration."

Al-Bid has refused to go to Sanaa, demanding major economic, political and military reforms. He returned directly to Aden late Wednesday after touring Oman and Saudi Arabia.

Mission Expected 'Any Moment'

JN2402193794 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Official Yemeni sources said this evening that a joint Jordanian-Omani military mission will arrive in Yemen at any moment to help merge the northern and southern units in the united Yemeni Army. This joint move comes amid the continued clashes between northern and southern army units that have erupted since the beginning of this week. According to southern sources, more than 20 military personnel have been killed in these clashes.

Shabwah Government Committee Denounces Incidents

JN2402190594 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] The follow-up committee of the mass gathering of the sons of Shabwah Governorate has issued the following statement:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

At a time when our Yemeni people received with great satisfaction the signing of the accord document in the Jordanian capital, Amman, and after it was hoped that a final countdown would begin to resolve the political crisis, the Yemeni people were surprised by a deterioration in the security and military situation in Abyan Governorate. As a result, many people fell as victims, even in this blessed month. These regrettable incidents are sought by forces hostile to unity and democracy to prevent the implementation of the accord document, which is a safety mechanism for unity and democracy.

While receiving this regrettable news, we denounce these incidents and consider them the beginning of a new political crisis that could jeopardize our unity and life. We ask for a prompt investigation and trial of the elements that sparked these incidents so that the tragedy will not be repeated. We also call for the removal of the causes of these incidents and the prevention of further such irresponsible actions so they will not expand beyond control.

We in the follow-up committee of the mass gathering for the sons of Shabwah ask the political leadership to face up to its responsibilities and begin the implementation of the accord document, since they have signed and pledged to implement this document. The document is a national program that has won the consensus of the Yemeni people.

We also ask our brothers and sons in the Armed Forces, the bulwark of Yemeni unity, not to disappoint this patient, loyal people and to help implement this document. They should also not be carried away by selfish whims and narrow interests. All military units should remain in their positions since their movement under these circumstances would delay the start of the implementation of this document and threaten the homeland's unity, security, and stability.

The sons of the Shabwah Governorate also assert that they will be faithful to the implementation of the document to which they have agreed upon in their gathering. They will particularly spare their governorate all conflicts, military skirmishes, and political confrontation. All military units will remain in their original places to

avoid any clashes, which could claim many lives in the governorate. This governorate will also refrain from causing any tension to spread to other governorates so that the accord document can be implemented in accordance with the agreed upon mechanism.

The follow-up committee also asks the political leadership and the commanders of military units to honor the documents of the mass gathering of the Shabwah Governorate and not to turn the governorate into a battlefield or a source of tension for other governorates.

May God grant us all success for the good, security, and stability of this homeland.

Our Lord. Decide thou between us and our people in truth, for thou art the best to decide. [Koranic verse]

Issued by the follow-up committee of the mass gathering of the sons of Shabwah Governorate.

Abyan Governorate Urges Salih To Withdraw Forces

JN2402185394 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Message addressed to the chairman and members of the Yemeni Presidential Council on 24 February]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Esteemed brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, Presidential Council chairman and commander in chief of the Armed Forces: Greetings of the revolution and unity. While we do not want to remind you of the stands, sacrifices, and heroic deeds, that the sons of the Abyan Governorate have registered at various stages and of their national militant role in achieving unity and democracy, we would like to stress that the situation in Abyan Governorate has become grave as a result of the barbaric provocations and killings to which the governorate's honorable and innocent sons are being exposed. We urge you to face up to your responsibilities and your historic mission, which you pledged to God to carry out for your people and your homeland.

While we take pride in the fact that Abyan has been destined to be the cradle of the revolution and the revolutionaries, we are displeased by the negligence displayed toward the governorate and its achievements. In addition to losing its best and noblest men, as well as being deprived of most of its rights and needs, Abyan Governorate is being exposed to killings and torture. (?Most parts) of the governorate are still to this moment besieged by the most lethal machines of destruction and death, which were brought by the advocates of division to settle purely divisionist scores.

Brother Presidential Council chairman, brother members: While we are addressing you, our hearts are bleeding because of what is happening to our sons, daughters, mothers, brothers, and sisters. While we reiterate our readiness to continue to offer more sacrifices for the sake of unity, we do not want our governorate, Abyan, to be the hotbed of the conflict, which would not serve the homeland or the people's interest. Therefore, we urge the withdrawal of all the military units from the governorate, as well as the implementation of the contents of the accord document, as the only solution to the crisis.

While we urge you to abide by this, we call on the parties in the coalition; all the political forces, represented by the Dialogue Committee; all the political organizations; and the vocational and creative popular organizations to close ranks in the face of threats to our unity and the implementation of the Amman accord.

Brother Presidential Council chairman, brother members: The state of loss being experienced by the sons of the Abyan Governorate, throughout the republic, and abroad as a result of statements transmitted by print and electronic media organs, prompts us to urge, through this message, a halt to this media propaganda that only harms our governorate. At the same time, we call for the facts to be clarified to our people through the military committee and the Political Forces Dialogue Committee so that we, as well as our people's masses, can unveil those behind the bloody conflict from which the sons of Abyan—who are faithful to God, the homeland, the revolution, and unity—are suffering. May God grant you success in maintaining the interest of the homeland and people. Peace and God's mercy and blesses be upon you.

[Signed] The sons of Abyan Governorate

Abyan Citizens Issue Statement on Current Situation

JN2402213894 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 24 Feb 94

["Text" of statement issued by the sons of the Abyan Governorate "today"—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

An important statement. Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenants with Allah; of them some have died and some still wait, but they have never changed their determination in the least. [Koranic verse]

O masses of our lofty Yemeni people: As history recorded in its black chapters the hideous crimes and rancorous practices perpetrated against the honest people of Abyan by warmongers and vampires, it also recorded in its shining chapters the honest stands, sacrifices, and heroic acts carried out by the sons of Abyan throughout ages.

Abyan represented the torch of the revolution. We only mention this as a reminder to say that we are proud that Abyan is the birthplace of [name indistinct], 'Abbas, [names indistinct], Muhmmad 'Ali Haytham, and former Yemeni president 'Ali Nasir Muhmmad.

O masses of our lofty people: The Abyan Governorate, which turned over the black chapters of history, [passage indistinct]. What took place during the past stages will not prevent us from continuing to struggle and defend unity and democracy. Abyan will always remain a symbol of loftiness and pride. As it was the cradle of revolution and revolutionaries, it will continue to be so during the unity.

Let the banners of unity and democracy remain high. Splendid victory is the lot of our masses. Pride to Abyan and glory to its sons.

[Signed] The sons of the Abyan Governorate, Sanaa

[Dated] 22 [as heard] February 1994

Mudiyah Residents Issue Statement on Shelling

JN2402220394 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] The sons of the Mudiyah District in Abyan Governorate have issued a statement to the masses of the Yemeni people in which they pointed out that while the Yemeni people were impatiently awaiting opportunities to end the political crisis, which has been besetting them for more than six months, and while they were hopefully looking forward to a new stage as a result of the signing of the accord document, we were surprised by the serious escalations and military movements, including the transfer of the Unity Brigade from its camp in Mukalla in the Hadramaut Governorate, the transfer of a number of tanks and armed vehicles from the 5th Brigade in Aden, and the transfer of the 30th Brigade from the Shabwah Governorate. All of these were transported to the Abyan Governorate to kill, terrorize, and oppress citizens of the Abyan Governorate, particularly the sons of the Mudiyah District, who are being subjected to the ugliest massacres and the fiercest terrorist and inhuman actions for their courageous, nationalist positions and for their refusal to be drawn into the current sedition. These sons firmly adhere to the option of unity and democracy and bravely confront the advocates of division and separation.

The statement expresses strong surprise over and denunciation of the transmission today of a fabricated message on the second channel in the name of the sons of the Mudiyah District—a statement which contained many mistakes and lies. This is usual for those who are known for such actions throughout their dark history. The statement announces to all our people's masses and to public opinion inside and outside the country that the message attributed to the sons of the Mudiyah District is a crime of forgery to be added to the series of ugly crimes committed by those who are forging history and facts against the interests of our people's sons in general and the sons of the Abyan Governorate [words indistinct] in particular. The contents of that wicked, forged, and fabricated message, worked out in the well-known kitchens of false information, expose the evil intentions of those who fabricated the message in order to ignite more fires of sedition among the sons of the one Yemeni homeland and to distract attention from the reality of the ugly crimes being committed against the sons of the Mudiyah District at the hands of the Unity Brigade forces and the party militia.

The brutal shelling from various heavy, medium, and light weapons is continuing, causing great loss of life among the innocent and peaceful citizens, as well as much property damage. The statement appeals to the masses of the Yemeni people, the Presidential Council, and all the political forces and national figures to rescue their brothers, the sons of the Mudiyah District, as well as other areas of the Abyan Governorate. It call for the end of this nightmare that threatens the future of their sons and families and the future of the whole homeland. It asks for a historic, responsible position to be taken toward those adventurers who are blinded by their personal interests and their selfishness, who are risking the homeland, and who are pushing the people into the furnace of a destructive war.

The statement urges those who have stolen the joy from our hearts and the smiles from our faces and destroyed the hope that was planted at the moment the accord document was signed to return to the capital of the country so that its institutions can shoulder their responsibilities within the framework of the constitutional institutions and to begin to translate the pledge and accord document into reality. Instead of doing so, they traveled from capital to capital without being asked to and without consulting others, ignoring all the legitimate institutions, the honor of the Yemeni people, the constitution, and all the norms and [words indistinct] in an exposed attempt to avoid the implementation of the accord, contain it, and make harmful hints that do not serve the interest of the nation, the people, and the homeland.

The sons of the Mudiyah District concluded their statement by urging everybody to face up to the challenges that are imposed by such irresponsible behavior and to be more alert to confronting all plots to undermine unity and democracy. May God protect dear Yemen and its unity from any harm and grant us success.

[Signed] The sons of Mudiyah District.

Marches Held To Protest 'Armed Attacks' on Citizens

JN2402210494 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Demonstrations have been staged in a number of Yemeni cities to protest the armed attacks on the population of Mudiyah in the valiant Abyan Governorate. Raised placards called for an end to the armed aggression and continuing attacks on the population. They also called for the military units to be withdrawn to their bases in compliance with the Military Council's decisions. The demonstrators emphasized that the Armed Forces are the property of the people and protectors of the revolution's gains and national unity. They stressed the need for commitment to the accord document and that they wanted legitimacy, the constitution, and the democratic choice to be consolidated in the interest of national unity.

Talks With Western Oil Companies Reported

NC2402163394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1545 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Feb (MENA)—A responsible Iraqi Oil Ministry source has stated that a high-level Iraqi oil delegation will visit Paris soon in response to an invitation from the Elf Equitaine and Total companies, which specialize in oil exploration projects.

A MENA correspondent in Baghdad has learned that negotiations have been going on behind the scenes between representatives of several international oil companies, particularly Western and U.S. companies and Iraq, to exploit the Majnun oilfields in southeast Iraq, which are known to hold the biggest oil reserves in the world.

The correspondent has learned from oil experts in Iraq that Iraq prefers the French to the Western and U.S. companies because it believes that the French stance on the embargo imposed on Iraq has recently changed, especially at the Security Council.

Observers base this view on a statement made by Dr. Riyad al-Qaysi, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry under secretary, in which he referred to the change in the French stance during a news conference he held with UN team leader Rolf Ekeus earlier this month.

A responsible UN source in Baghdad told MENA's correspondent that these oil talks are not regarded as a violation of UN resolutions.

Iraq has 110 billion barrels of crude oil—the second largest oil reserves in the world. The Majnun oilfields have 50 billion barrels of proven and unproven oil reserves in the so-called "al-Rumaylah rectangle," which extends from south Iraq to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and some parts of southwest Iran.

This field was one of the reasons the eight-year Iraqi-Iranian war erupted.

Qatari TV Airs Special Report on Blockade

NC2402134594

[Editorial Report] Doha Qatar Television Service in Arabic at 2000 GMT on 12 February 1994 carries a 45-minute recorded program on Iraq. The program is entitled "The Blockade," and is subtitled "A Special Program on the Impact of the Economic Blockade on Iraq." A map of Iraq is shown in yellow. A white ring surrounds the middle of the map near Baghdad. No other countries are shown on the map, the rest of which is colored green.

The program opens with a Qatari announcer standing under a monument in Baghdad commemorating the Iran-Iraq war. The monument consists of two long swords stretching from the two sides of a wide avenue and forming a huge arch. The video then cuts to show Baghdad streets and people shopping in a market place.

The announcer opens the program with the following announcement: "The blockade has created a big crisis inside Iraq. The Iraqi people are looking to the international community to end this blockade. Today, what is the main picture of the economic, social, and health conditions in Baghdad and other Iraqi provinces? To convey this picture from where it is happening and from the center of events, a Qatari television mission set out on a journey that lasted over 10 hours between the Jordanian capital Amman—the only gate to Iraq—and Baghdad. It is a trip that conveys several images and many answers to what is taking place in Iraq after almost three and a half years of blockade."

The announcer interviews a citizen who complains that he cannot find the medicine prescribed for him by a doctor. The citizen blames the blockade for the shortage of medicine. He says he "wants the world to see our suffering." Another citizen says "all the people need food, not only medicine. The blockade is unjust for all the Iraqi people." A third citizen notes that children are especially suffering because of lack of medicine. However, he notes that "despite the blockade, the Iraqi people are standing fast." More citizens complain about the high price of food and clothes. The announcer says: "The Iraqi individual is facing an economic crisis in view of his low daily or monthly income. The average monthly income does not exceed 500 Iraqi dinars." A woman says she cannot buy new clothes and has to be content with old and hand-stitched clothes. A man says his monthly salary is 120 dinars, which is just enough for a meal in a restaurant in Baghdad. Another man says his monthly salary is 125 dinars, while the price of a kilo of meat is 160 dinars. Young men cannot get married, as a wedding costs between 50,000 and 100,000 dinars. He appeals to humanitarian organizations to help the Iraqi people. A citizen says that "because of the blockade some people have resorted to crime—to theft, kidnapping, rape, etcetera." More citizens are interviewed and they all complain about the high price of food and clothing. The announcer notes that "food staples, such as rice, sugar, and flour, are available in most markets of Baghdad and other provinces, but their prices are beyond the reach of most Iraqis."

In a four-minute interview, Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih is asked what the materials are that can be imported from abroad and what the materials are that can be exported under the current blockade. He says that no exports are allowed because "UN Security Council resolutions still prevent Iraq from exporting any commodity." He notes that "after Resolution 687 was issued and after the military aggression against our country stopped, Iraq was allowed to import food and medicine. But how can it import when there are no oil exports and when our funds in foreign banks, specifically in U.S., British, French, and German banks, are still frozen? Therefore, the means of importing these materials are also frozen. At the end of 1991, we were allowed to import through the frozen funds. We imported a quantity of foodstuffs, but another resolution, No. 778,

was issued at the end of 1992 re-freezing the Iraqi funds and preventing Iraq from using them to buy food and medicine."

Asked about a certain UN Security Council resolution allowing Iraq to export a specified quantity of oil—just enough to enable it to import humanitarian materials—the minister says: "In fact, this resolution was designed for the purpose of paying the expenses of the inspection teams and other UN expenses and not for the purpose of securing the needs of the Iraqi people. Therefore, the resolution was designed and its technical details were drawn up in such a way as to secure the export of a quantity of oil without securing the import of materials. This resolution also interferes in the country's domestic affairs regarding the distribution of materials to the population."

Asked about the recent arrival of ships at the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, the minister says: "In fact, when funds are available, the materials that are allowed to be imported, such as food, come through al-'Aqabah. The Turkish line is also open for food imports. However, the problem lies in financing imports. As for Umm Qasr port, its opening and the entry of ships into it last month enabled Iraq to have direct contacts with the outside world and to import permitted materials and commodities. In other words, goods arrive at our national territory directly and we have direct contacts with the outside the world. This is an essential point on the subject. In addition, the cost of imports is reduced when goods come to our ports directly. The harsh economic conditions in the country require a reduction in the cost of imports when the country is in a position to import any quantity of food and medicine."

The video then shows the Jordanian border point of al-Karamah on the Jordanian-Iraqi border and trucks transporting Iraqi crude oil to Jordan. More scenes are shown of Iraqi markets and more interviews are carried out with Iraqi citizens.

The program then carries a two-minute interview with the Hashim 'Ali 'Ubayd, under secretary of the Ministry of Finance. He says: "The current exchange rate of foreign currencies, especially the dollar, in the Iraqi market and in the so-called parallel market does not represent the real exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar. This is because Iraq's foreign assets and funds are frozen. Iraq has not been allowed to export any commodity to earn these currencies. The current market of foreign currencies is very small and depends on what is available of these currencies in the market. It does not represent the real exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar."

The video then shows children in Iraqi hospitals and notes lack of medical equipment, in addition to lack of medicine. Several women who were interviewed stress that there is no medicine for babies, either in hospitals or in pharmacies. A nurse says that babies are suffering from anemia and malnutrition. A pediatrician says there are no antibiotics or other medicine.

In a 8-minute interview, Health Minister Dr. 'Umid Midhat Mubarak says: "Regrettably, the unjust UN resolutions have affected the situation. We can no longer obtain diagnostic materials such as primary chemical materials. We cannot even obtain isotopes, which everyone knows cannot be used for nonmedical purposes." He says the "mortality rate for children under five years old in 1989 was not more than 375 children per month. In December 1993, the mortality rate was over 4,000 per month. As for citizens over five years old, the mortality rate in 1989 was 1,700 per month; now it is approximately 6,500 per month." The health minister says most surgery is being postponed due to lack of equipment and medicine. He notes that due to lack of foreign currencies, Iraqi patients cannot be sent abroad for treatment. He regrets that some countries who claim to be defenders of human rights have denied entry visas to Iraqi patients. He notes that "the brothers in Qatar have recently sent medical consignments." He expresses the hope that "the brothers and real friends will realize this injustice inflicted on every single one of the Iraqi people for purely political reasons." He says these reasons are no longer justified and there is no need to use them to bring political pressure."

In a two-minute interview, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf is asked whether he expects the blockade imposed on Iraq by the UN Security Council to be partially or wholly lifted in the near future. He gives the following answer: "We are working to complete the implementation of Paragraph 22. Logic says that the correct course is for Iraq and the Security Council to complete the work together to implement Paragraph 22 without any political conditions being added to it by any party. There is a very clear text. There are requirements which should be fulfilled to implement this text. These requirements are that Ambassador Ekeus, chairman of the Security Council Ad Hoc Committee, and Dr. Hans Blix, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], should submit a report to the Security Council, in accordance with the mandate given to them, saying that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under Section C, that is Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13. We are close to reaching this situation. We will work with the Ad Hoc Committee and the IAEA to complete the technical formulas for beginning the implementation of the supervision programs in accordance with Resolution 715. Consequently, it will be the duty of the Security Council to implement Paragraph 22."

The video then shows more interviews with Iraqi citizens praising the State of Qatar and appealing to Arab states to help the Iraqi people. One citizen says "Kuwait returned to its people and Jabir returned as its amir. So what does the United Nations want? What does the Security Council want? What does the world want? What do the great powers want? What do they want from the Iraqi people? The people are suffering greatly and dying. There is no food, no medicine, and no essential goods."

Columnist Views 'Disgraceful' U.S. Behavior

JN2402162594 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 20 Feb 94 p 7

["Windows" column by Diya' Hasan: "U.S. Administration Behavior Reveals its Ill Intentions"]

[Text] The U.S. administration's behavior and daily stands show that its tyranny is aimed at imposing its interests on others, contrary to all international rules, even if the others are friends and allies. It also attempts to rudely interfere in others' internal affairs.

Today, I would like to take two examples of this disgraceful behavior of the United States, which it is openly following in its dealings with the world.

The first example is the request Warren Christopher made to Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani during their recent meeting in Washington. Christopher wanted the sisterly Arab state to desist from strengthening its fraternal relations with Iraq. The second example is Clinton's arrogant request to the Japanese prime minister to impose taxes on the Japanese industries exported to the United States and to give special facilities to U.S. exports to Japan. He wants to tip the trade balance between the two countries in Washington's favor. When the Japanese rejected this request that would damage their industries, Clinton ordered a series of trade measures hostile to Tokyo. This was a declaration of war against an ally, well within earshot of the entire world.

These two examples shown once again that Washington will never be satisfied if it does not impose its will on other countries. Qatar is not allowed to practice independent decisionmaking with regard to its relations with its sisterly and friendly states. And Japan, which a major economic power in the world today, is not allowed to compete against U.S. industries, but must be forced to direct its development in the interest of the United States.

Both examples indicate that U.S. policy under any administration does not really have any friends or allies in its general dealing. How many enemies does the United States have today, and how many more will it have in the future? This shows the extent to which Washington controls the world. The important thing is that the rejection of this hegemony has begun in different forms, including the firm rejection represented by the Iraqi stand.

Columnist Targets U.S. Use of 'Nuclear Ammunition'

JN2402130794 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 18 Feb 94 p 2

[From the "Standpoint" column by 'Adil Sa'd: "Guenther's Irrefutable Testimony"]

[Text] What will draw world public attention to the serious information revealed by Professor Ziekvart Hoerst Guenther concerning the use of internationally banned nuclear ammunition by the United States and its allies in their aggression against Iraq? This German doctor has concluded from intensive laboratory tests that the Americans and their allies used nuclear radioactive weapons in their aggression against Iraq, contrary to international conventions banning the use of such weapons; foremost of which is the Geneva Convention of 1949. One of the conclusions reached by this European scientist is that several Iraqi children actually died from exposure to radiation from the abovementioned ammunition, and that 30-40 tonnes of radioactive uranium were dropped by U.S. and allied forces over the southern desert region of Iraq.

There is no doubt whatsoever about Dr. Guenther's findings, since they are the result of a scientific and analytical study of samples obtained from the battlefield. He has no interest in them, other than his desire to serve the truth and to expose the aggressors and their false claims, which has subjected him to many dangers. Therefore, his findings are considered irrefutable testimony. Dr. Gunther wanted to tell this truth so it will be added to the other facts and conclusions reached by the working team of former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the working group of "Doctors Without Borders," the Harvard University Committee, the secretary general of the World Health Organization, and several other international organizations and figures known for their objectivity and honesty.

Professor Guenther's testimony and the previous facts and conclusions about the same subject must not, by any moral or political standards, be let to pass by without moving the world public and regional and international organizations concerned with human rights and the causes of peace, condemning the U.S. aggressor and its allies, and removing the injustice done to Iraq as a result of this despicable act, which violated all laws, norms, and values.

The U.S. crime of using nuclear weapons against the Iraqis is, in fact, a double crime because: First, the United States has violated the provisions of an international law, which was endorsed by the world community and to which many states have given their commitment, headed the United States itself. So by torpedoing this law, the United States has assumed full responsibility for deliberately committing a crime while aware of the great harm it would do. Second, the Americans have cheated the United Nations by using it in carrying out their odious aggression, which also means that they are responsible for the crime of diverting this world organization from the noble purposes and objectives enshrined in its charter. We cannot possibly imagine the United Nations agreeing to serve as a cover for the use of nuclear arms, when it does not stop talking about its responsibility to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and when it is the international sponsor of the nonproliferation treaty.

The world is called upon not to let the case of the U.S. use of nuclear weapons against Iraq be forgotten or treated slightly. The least that must be done is to stop the ramification of that crime in the form of the existing unfair blockade, which is in fact a supplement to the nuclear weapons used by the Americans and their allies. It is only fair and just for world public to agree to the proposal made by Ramsey Clark to form an international pressure group in order to urge the Security Council and the Sanctions Committee to remove that blockade.

What the Security Council and the Sanctions Committee can do in this regard will correct part of the gross mistake they have made. Moreover, it will ensure the return to political logic that must prevail in international life.

Columnist Views U.S. Role in 'New World Order'

JN2402125894 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic
17 Feb 94 p 2

[Article by 'Abd al-Jabbar Muhsin: "Iraqi Words on the New World Order"]

[Text] There is a glaring contradiction between the so-called "New World Order" and the nature of history. History is not unipolar, but is based on a number of contradictions, such as the contradiction between dream and reality. Every current reality was once a dream, and no matter how satisfactory the current reality is, it also has its dream that it wants to fulfill. The logic of history is that it is in a constant state of evolution. So despite ups and downs in human progress, the final outcome is this inevitable evolution. There is also a conflict of interests between classes, nations, generations, and between the new technologies and their acquired values on the one hand, and the prevailing inherited values on the other. Any strong blow to a new world order will come from a conflict of interests, cultures, beliefs, and ambitions between North and South and East and West.

Overlooking these facts will make the "New World Order" a mere assumption, a proposal, or an aspiration. Even in one family, which consists of only a few individuals, it is very difficult to devise a way to reconcile the separate aims, conflicting desires, and different concerns of its members, let alone a situation on a worldwide level. Mankind with all its diversities and vast areas is too big to contain in any crucible, and to melt and mould on any fire.

The problem with the United States is that it is formulating its policies in isolation of history, because it is a nation without history.

The gangster system, which is prevalent in the underworld of U.S. cities, in making money, and attaining high position—including even the presidency—has left its imprint on U.S. policy, where might is right.

This feeling of power has eliminated the bipolar world order. To the United States, the world now is a hand-mill turning around one pivot, which is the United States of course.

There has always been ignorance of time, conflict between opposite sides, and of other party or parties.

There has always been the feeling that using force or threatening to use force is sufficient to make the United States assume the role of a deity in Greek mythology.

Force of arms can hammer out a new world, where all people are slaves and where the United States rules supreme on its throne forever. The UN Security Council, with its big and small states, is that world, and a knock from its chairman's mallet is sufficient to make things happen.

But no one seems to think that compared to the world, the Security Council is just a tiny drop in an ocean. How many billions on our global earth are suffering, dreaming, or fed up with their lives? They all seek freedom, food, and honor, and they all believe that these aspirations are their legitimate right and that it is their duty to work hard in order to attain them.

How can we combine the casinos of Las Vegas and Monte Carlo, the cafes of the Champs-Elysees, and the winter resorts of Switzerland with the camps of the Palestinians, the villages of India, the alleys of Manila, the famine areas of Somalia, the mine that exploded from the bag of history in Yugoslavia, the internecine fighting in Afghanistan, and the search for potato roots in the debris of the Soviet Union? Indeed, how can we combine all of these in one context or formula? Can they, in their "New World Order," cancel the conflict of interests between the United States and Japan; or between Britain and Germany; or between them and the sharks of the EC states? Can they solve ethnic, religious, and racial problems and the border problems existing since World War I? Can they feed all the hungry, or make all people equal in hunger and poverty? They cannot. So how will this world order look? Let us assume that they can do all that. But this would mean that they have defeated the purpose of establishing the New World Order, which is to place their interests above the interests of all the other states.

There remains power. The United States, with all its air and naval fleets, ground forces, armies, missiles, security organs, media, the additional strength of its allies and agents, its funds, and the funds of its oil-rich allies, could not make the people of Iraq—a country small in area and population—budge an inch from its position. So what was the use of this power?

Iraq remained as it wanted, not as they wanted it to be. The same thing happened in Lebanon and is happening in Somalia, although at a much-reduced level. The world's garment is tattered and its body is exposed to the winds and sun. No system is big enough to handle the tragedies of the universe or to stem their natural flow.

Shaping world destinies in closed chambers means creating delusions.

Columnist Criticizes al-Asad's Policy on Israel

JN2402135494 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 18 Feb 94 p 8

[Article by Nawwaf Abu-al-Hayja': "Boasting About Shame"]

[Text] About what is the "Hafr al-Batin crowd" boastful? Are they boastful because they fought for the liberation of Palestine, the Golan, or southern Lebanon? Or, are they boastful because they joined forces with the Zionists, the Americans, and other enemies of Arabism for the sake of a single Arab nation?

One of the theorists of Hafiz al-Asad's policy, a freak called Zuhayr Diyab, spoke boastfully to the Zionist paper HA'ARETZ, thus openly declaring the traitorous normalization between the al-Asad regime and the Zionist enemy. What did he say? Let us read parts of what this member of Hafiz al-Asad's party has said.

He said: The Syrian decision to join the peace process was not made when President al-Asad accepted the Bush initiative, but some 20 years earlier, after the 1973 war when Syria's inclination toward recognizing the Jewish state and abandoning the policy of eliminating Israel began to crystallize.

Why, then, did they get angry when Iraq called the 1973 war, the war of reactivation [tahrik]?

This typical slanderer, who represents Hafiz al-Asad's authority, said: The majority of Syrians—intellectuals, militarymen, businessmen, and politicians—accept the reality of Israeli existence. This proves the matter depended not only on a decision by al-Asad, but was also a development that began some 20 years ago.

Thus, the chain of Arab recognitions is crowned by a boastful remark that Hafiz al-Asad was the first to recognize the aggression and injustice embodied by the Zionist enemy. This is not the main point. The main point is that every Arab ruler or government official who today rushes to Tel Aviv to kiss the ground under the Zionists' feet claims he is doing so because it is a public desire and that he is only carrying out the people's wish. This was done by Anwar al-Sadat when he embarked on his treason in Camp David. But time proved our people in Egypt opposed that blatant treason.

The Gaza-Jericho agreement, signed on behalf of the Palestinian people in the occupied homeland, is also being staggered by the overwhelming pressure of public opposition and the continuation of the brave intifada.

As for the claim by this trivial opportunist that our Syrian people accept the Zionist entity, it will, sooner of later, be faced by the masses of our people in Syria. But the main question is: If the traitors and weaklings now lining up outside Tel Aviv are honest when they say they represent the wishes of the masses in their countries, why then do they not hold free and honest referendums so people can express their opinion on a question that affects their security, present, and future, as well as the future of the Arab nation? Or does the ruler who carries out the orders of his overlords believe he can think on behalf of the people, and that he is in a position to determine their destiny, even if he has to place all the people in his big prison?

What appears in the HA'ARETZ interview about normalization with the active member of al-Asad's apparatus and party sheds light on all the stands and policies al-Asad has adopted since 1973, including the entry of his forces into Lebanon in 1976, his support for the Iranian war against Iraq, his attempts to split up the Palestinian organizations and Lebanese forces, his open alliance with the Zionists and the other agents in Hafr al-Batin, his feverish rush to Madrid, and then Washington, in order to liquidate the Palestine question, and his conspiracies against the historic leadership of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party party since 1966 and up to this moment.

Demobilization of Several Thousand Servicemen Ordered

NC2402184094 Paris AFP in English 1552 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Feb (AFP)—Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has ordered the demobilization of 24-year-old conscripts who have completed their military service, Army Chief of Staff Ahmad Ibrahim Hammash announced Thursday [24 February].

General Hammash, quoted by the armed forces newspaper AL-QADISIYAH, said several thousand servicemen aged between 21 and 23 would also be demobilized soon. He did not give precise figures.

Several thousand servicemen were demobilized after the 1991 Gulf war.

According to Western sources, the Iraqi armed forces' personnel has been reduced by 60 percent since the war. They currently number some 400,000.

After the war the Iraqi parliament decided to reduce military service for university graduates from two years to 18 months.

Gunman Kills Over 50 Arabs at Hebron Mosque 25 Feb

Incident Detailed

NC2502084794 Paris AFP in English 0629 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Hebron, West Bank, Feb 25 (AFP)—A lone Israeli settler gunned down 18 Palestinians and wounded dozens more Friday [25 February] at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the occupied West Bank City of Hebron, military officials and doctors said.

The man then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide.

One Hebron doctor said 16 Palestinians were certified dead in a Hebron hospital and another two in a hospital in east Jerusalem. More than 70 other were wounded.

The killer apparently disguised himself in an Israeli Army uniform before opening up with an automatic rifle on the Moslem faithful who turned out in large numbers for Friday prayers during the fasting month of Ramadan.

The army imposed a curfew on Hebron and closed off the area of the Tomb, which is holy to Jews and Moslems alike and crowded every morning. Scuffles broke out in the complex on Thursday evening as Israelis celebrated the start of Purim, a holiday marking the deliverance of Jews from a massacre in Persia.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal condemned the slaughter.

"I condemn in the strongest possible way these murders, whatever the nationality of the person who committed them," he said.

Palestinian militants declared a strike on the Gaza Strip in memory of the dead and the Koran, the Moslem holy book, was read out in the mosques, a correspondent reported.

It was the worst killing ever by Jewish settlers, who in July 1983 shot dead four Palestinian students in Hebron. Border police shot dead 20 Palestinians on Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem in October 1990.

The Tomb complex, which houses a mosque, fell under Israeli control in the 1967 Middle East war and has since been shared by the two religions.

Hebron has always been one of the tensest of Palestinian towns where 500 Jews live among 70,000 Arabs. Another 5,000 Jews live in the adjacent settlement of Qiryat Arba'.

In Hebron, Palestinian protestors smashed an AFP photographer's car with rocks.

Before Friday's killings, 1,180 Palestinians had died from Israeli bullets since the intifadah or uprising began in December 1987. Over the same period 203 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians.

An anonymous telephone caller to AFP in Jerusalem claimed responsibility for the killing in the name Jewish extremists.

The caller said the massacre was to avenge the December 6 shooting by Islamic fundamentalists of an Israeli settler and his son, Mordekhay and Shalom Lapid, in Hebron.

The caller said he represented the "Zealots of the God of Israel", an unknown group.

An AFP photographer reported that violent clashes erupted in Hebron between Palestinians and soldiers who had opened fire.

At the city's Al-Ahli hospital dead bodies were still arriving.

"The dead and wounded are still being brought in," said photographer Patrick Baz. "A small child was just brought in dead from bullet wounds. He was wrapped in a blood-stained blanket."

Witnesses Say 'Up to Five' Involved

NC2502110794 Paris AFP in English 1035 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpt] Hebron, Occupied West Bank, Feb 25 (AFP)—A group of up to five Jewish settlers carried out Friday's [25 February] massacre of Palestinian worshippers and not just a lone gunman, Palestinian witnesses said.

'Aziz al-Hashmami, aged 40, told AFP he was inside the Tomb of the Patriarchs when the shooting started and said that "four to five" gunmen had opened fire as the Palestinian knelt in prayer.

"Other Palestinians I spoke to also said they saw five," he said, without being able to explain what happened to the killers afterwards.

The Israeli army said the killing was the work of one settler who apparently committed suicide afterwards.

Another witness, Husayn 'Isa al-Rajabi, 42, said he saw a second settler feed the gunman with ammunition as he raked the worshippers with gunfire.

Imam Ibrahim 'Abidin, who was leading Friday prayers, said the shots came from "several directions."

"It can only be a planned operation because there were a lot of settlers inside the mosque," he added.

A Palestinian told Israeli radio he saw a gunman firing from behind a pillar.

"I'm sure that settlers outside the building threw cartridges to the killer who could keep on firing," the Palestinian said.

Military radio said the gunman was Barukh Goldstein, a doctor from the settlement of Qiryat Arba'.

Settlers from there have made death threats against Palestinians following a rash of anti-Israeli attacks on the West Bank.

A Jewish extremist network, mainly from Qiryat Arba', killed four Palestinian students from Hebron and committed several other attacks. [passage omitted]

Weapons in Massacre Detailed

TA2502073594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0653 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Discussion between moderator Itay Engel in the studio and correspondent Netan'el Semrik in Hebron—live]

[Text] [Semrik] Several moments ago, a senior military source revealed that an initial investigation indicated that the Arab worshippers were fired upon by two weapons: an M-16 rifle and a revolver that apparently were in the possession of the Qiryat Arba' resident who opened fire at the worshippers and later committed suicide.

The authorities are currently investigating the assertions made earlier by a witness according to which additional Jews assisted the settler who opened fire. The defense establishment has no confirmation of this claim which is currently being investigated.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is now dispatching reinforcements to Judaea and Samaria. A curfew has been imposed on Hebron and there is a general closure on the Gaza Strip. Arab workers from the Gaza Strip are not being permitted to enter Israel. The IDF General Staff is calling on the Jewish and Arab residents of the territories and Israel to show restraint. A series of steps are being taken at this time in an attempt to prevent any exacerbation of tensions or a deterioration of the situation in the territories.

Reports streaming in from Hebron, which as mentioned earlier is under curfew, indicate that there are small gatherings of Arab residents. Settlers reported stonethrowing incidents around Hebron and near Halhul. Nevertheless, three hours after the bloody incident at the Cave of the Patriarchs, the security forces seem to have the situation under control and there are no serious incidents.

[Engel] You said that the initial investigation indicates that two weapons were used in the shooting. Do the results of the investigation also specify whether the man who committed the massacre used both weapons or did he have an accomplice?

[Semrik] The current premise of the security forces is that the shooting was carried out by one man, a settler from Qiryat Arba' disguised in an IDF officer's uniform. As far as is known at the present time, he was carrying two firearms, an M-16 rifle and a revolver. We will have more accurate details later on.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0700 GMT on 25 February adds that "in the Gaza Strip this morning, tires are burning in many locations and stones are being hurled at the security forces. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the residents of the strip are being updated in Hebron through loudspeakers in the mosques. From time to time, instigatory calls are heard from the mosques in between prayers being read from the Koran. There have so far not been any reports of serious clashes between the army and residents."]

Perpetrator Identified as U.S. Immigrant

TA2502114494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] The settler who this morning murdered the Arab worshipers in the Cave of the Patriarchs is Dr. Barukh Goldstein, a Qiryat Arba' doctor. Dr. Goldstein immigrated from the United States. He was a Kakh member and was its candidate to the Qiryat Arba' local elections. During the shooting spree, Dr. Goldstein wore his IDF [Israel Defense Forces] uniform with the insignia of his rank of captain in the military reserves. Dr. Goldstein was killed after the shooting, but it is not clear whether he committed suicide or the worshipers killed him.

'Rebels Movement' Assumes Responsibility

TA2502070894 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0658 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] A previously unknown movement, the Rebels Movement [Tnu'at Hamordim], an extreme Jewish movement whose members apparently belong to or are affiliated in some way with the Kakh Movement, called IDF Radio's news studio a short time ago and assumed responsibility for the massacre in Hebron. The anonymous caller said that the Rebels Movement assumes responsibility for the massacre committed to avenge the slaying of Rabbi Me'ir Kahana, the late leader of the Kakh Movement.

Leaflets on Incident Issued by Arabs

TA2502123594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1105 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Three leaflets were disseminated over the last few hours throughout Judaea and Samaria, the main one issued from Orient House, the PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem. This leaflet notes that it is the Isrseli Government that is fully responsible for the massacre in the Cave of the Patriarchs. This leaflet, like other leaflets disseminated in Judaea and Samaria today, does not at all refer to the possibility that this massacre was carried out by a private individual as an act of insanity. This leaflet calls for two things: to strip the settlers in Judaea and Samaria from the weapons given them by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and to declare three days of mourning in the territories, as of today, in the wake of the killing of about 50 Palestinians, residents of Hebron, in the Cave of the Patriarchs this morning.

Another leaflet was issued by Fatah, and it, too, denounces the massacre. This leaflet calls on the world to defend the Palestinians who, as the leaflet puts it, are not sufficiently protected by IDF soldiers, and are thus exposed to slaughter by the settlers.

Yet another leaflet, jointly drafted by two Rejectionist Fronts—the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine—categorically calls for a halt to the Israeli-Palestinian talks in the wake of this morning's massacre in the Cave of the Patriarchs. This leaflet also calls for a reaction by the Palestinian street.

We have yet another manifesto, circulated by a Jewish organization. The Kahana Hay organization has issued an announcement to the press, terming it a Purim deed in Hebron. The Kahana Hay members are mourning the death of martyr Barukh Goldstein who consecrated the name of God by his death, as Samson did at the time. Goldstein did what the Jews in Persia did, as noted in the Book of Esther, when they struck at all their enemies and did as they pleased with their foes. This is an excerpt of the statement to the press issued by Kahana Hay.

Death Reportedly Toll Rises to 53

NC2502114094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1122 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Tunis, 25 Feb (MENA)—The number of victims of the massacre perpetrated by Israeli settlers at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron at dawn today has risen to 53 martyrs.

This was reported by the Palestinian news agency WAFA in an urgent dispatch from Hebron city in the occupied territories.

Reaction From Various Leaders, Groups Noted

Rabin Comments on 'Horrendous Crime'

TA2502083794 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0816 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has issued his reaction to the incident in Hebron: A murder, an horrendous crime was committed today at a site in Hebron holy to Jews and Arabs. The prime minister and defense minister, the government ministers, and the citizens of the State of Israel strongly condemn the horrendous murder which struck innocent people and led to the shedding of blood of blameless human beings who were offering their prayers on the occasion of the Ramadan fast.

On my and the government's behalf, we express our sorrow and send our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and the Palestinian people, and we wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. We call on everybody, both Arabs and Jews, to evince restraint and not to get dragged into actions which might worsen the situation.

The members of the political-security Inner Cabinet have been summoned to a meeting at noon today to discuss the situation in the wake of this evil incident.

The prime minister goes on to say: This is a tough day for peace-loving people, both Arabs and Jews, but the demented actions of psychopaths will not prevent reconciliation and the making of peace between the citizens of the State of Israel and the Palestinian people. We will do everything necessary—and the deliberations on the making of peace may be accelerated—to prevent misunderstandings, remove obstacles, and together arrive at the day of peace, the day when extremists on both sides will lose all hope of harming the peace process from which we do not want to retreat.

In his statement, the prime minister makes clear that instructions have been issued to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and other security forces to do whatever is permitted and possible within the framework of the law to uphold public order and to prevent incidents and bloodshed.

Rabin Sends Message to 'Arafat

TA2502144994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1405 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Report by Karmela Menashe outside the prime minister's bureau in Tel Aviv —live]

[Text] Good day to you. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin spoke to Yasir 'Arafat on the phone a short while ago. Rabin told 'Arafat: On behalf of the government I would like to express shock over the brutal murder by this madman which resulted in the death of innocent people during Ramadan, at a place holy to both Jews and Arabs. I want to tell you that this is a disgrace to us all. We condemned this insane act and will do everything we can to ascertain what caused it. Although we know that the murderer committed suicide, we know that three days ago he said he wanted to carry out a dramatic act in order to halt the peace talks. He acted against us all, but especially, he killed innocent people, and we will adopt all measures to restore quiet and to check whether he had accomplices. I wanted to speak to you directly and to express the government's condolences to you and to the Palestinian people. I can find no words to denounce this act. Let us speed up the effort to do what we committed ourselves to in the Declaration of Principles. I am sorry that this happened now, in the middle of our attempt of reaching a conclusion on the Gaza and Jericho issues. As an Israeli, I am ashamed of this act.

The meeting at the Defense Ministry here in Tel Aviv, with the participation of the prime minister and ministers, is still continuing. U.S. Ambassador Djerejian came here and left the meeting a short while ago.

Baraq Expresses Shock

TA2502064694 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0637 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Here is an announcement from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman: The IDF is significantly reinforcing its troops in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza in the wake of the incident in Hebron. Also, a curfew has been clamped on Hebron and a closure has been imposed on the Gaza area.

Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq this morning expressed shock at the serious crime perpetrated in Hebron. The chief of staff sharply denounced the murders and shares in the grief of the families. The chief of staff announced that the crime would be investigated thoroughly, and that all the ensuing conclusions would be drawn. The chief of staff called on the Arab and Jewish population in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza to evince restraint and self-control at this difficult time.

'Senior Political Source' Comments

TA2502114994 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] A senior political source has just told us that he hopes that the PLO will not suspend the peace talks which are slated to resume in Cairo on Monday [28 February]. For the time being, it should be emphasized that no such decision has been announced in any of the condemnations issued by the PLO. A member of the Israeli team to talks with the PLO said that the incident will harm the peace process, but it must not be stopped. The senior political source said that the horrible massacre must not play into the hands of the extremists who are opposed to the political process. We were told by this source: We could have many reasons, after every terrorist action or murder in the territories, to stop the discussions with the PLO, but it would be a terrible mistake to suspend the talks.

The General Staff and defense establishment have held deliberations and engaged in situation assessments over the last few hours. The chief of staff instructed the cancellation of all vacations of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] commanders and Civil Administration heads. Military elements say that commanders have been instructed to avoid violent friction with the residents of the territories, but at the same time, to maintain law and order at all costs and to prevent a deterioration of the security situation. It has been reported that Israeli medical teams are aiding the wounded Palestinians.

Shahaq Relays Message to Sha'th

TA2502125594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1205 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal at the prime minister's bureau in Tel Aviv—live]

[Excerpt] The meeting of the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs is just beginning. Ministers estimated that the moves decided by the committee will be operational moves aimed at calming moods, not political moves. Still, on the political plane, Major General Amnon Shahaq, the head of the Israeli delegation to the Taba talks, relayed a message to Dr Nabil Sha'th, the head of the Palestinian delegation, expressing shock at the murders in Hebron. Shahaq passed on the condolences of the Israeli delegation with regard to the murder, and expressed the hope that this tragedy would not harm the effort for peace, an effort which is obviously aimed at preventing such incidents. [passage omitted]

Weizman, Chief Rabbi Comment

TA2502094794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In reaction to the Hebron incidents, the president of the state, 'Ezer Weizman, said that this is a terrible day for Jews and Arabs who live in this land. There is no understanding of, nor forgiveness for such a horrendous act, the president said, extending his condolences to the bereaved families, the residents of Hebron, and the entire Arab population in Israel and world-wide. The president added: This act must not harm the peace process and the chance of fostering cooperation and coexistence in the region. At this difficult hour, I call upon all leaders, religious and otherwise, of all parties—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—to share in the pain of the unnecessary loss of life, but to show restraint and to prevent a further deterioration.

Israel's Chief Rabbi Me'ir Lau said we have always opposed bloodshed, especially when it is committed against a religious background, and at a holy site and during prayers especially. It is the right of every person to pray to his God according to his faith, and anyone who deprives him of doing so is undermining the base of support on which human beings rely, particularly members of the Jewish nation who suffered from persecution and bloodshed throughout the ages.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has instructed the establishment of an emergency committee which will coordinate with the security forces on action necessary to prevent an escalation in the wake of the Hebron incidents.

Police Minister Denounces Slayings

TA2502090594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0545 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with Police Minister Moshe Shahal by Itay Engel and Tamar Landau—live]

[Text] [Engel] What do you know at this point about what happened in Hebron?

[Shahal] I have been in constant contact with the police commissioner since the moment the incident was first

reported. Together with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], we are investigating and checking all the circumstances of the incident.

First of all, I would like to express my sorrow at the loss of life and at this horrendous murder. I categorically denounce the slaying of human beings, whatever their nationality may be. The Israel Police and the security forces will make every possible effort to bring the people responsible for this act to trial. I call on all the sides to evince restraint and not to succumb to provocations on either side.

[Landau] Sir, the details in our possession are quite sketchy and we would like you to fill us in. When did the incident start?

[Shahal] I received the first report before 0600 [0400 GMT] this morning from the police commissioner, but I assume that the incident began earlier. Other details are currently being investigated. At this point, the picture is not yet entirely clear. We know that there were quite a few fatalities, and the toll reported to me was from six to eight dead. To repeat, I am in constant contact with the police commissioner, and I believe the picture will become clearer soon because an investigation is currently under way.

[Landau] Do you know the identity of the Israeli from Qiryat Arba' who opened fire at the Arabs?

[Shahal] We have the name of a Jew who was found there, who is either wounded or dead. We do not yet know what his role was in the incident, and we are currently collecting testimony from eyewitnesses to ascertain what exactly happened.

[Engel] From the initial details in our possession, we realize that the incident did not start this morning but last night, when Jewish and Muslim worshipers converged at the Cave of the Patriarchs, respectively for their Purim and Ramadan prayers, and clashed with each other. Were the police ready for such an eventuality? How many troops did you have on the spot?

[Shahal] You must understand that the Israel Police are not responsible for order and security in the territories, and it is only an auxiliary force helping bring lawbreakers to court. Israel Police and Border Police troops are under IDF command and are part of its deployment. They tried to calm down and deal with the situation. As said, I do not think I can comment about what happened this morning before I receive more accurate information.

[Landau] As far as we know, the Arabs attacked by the Israeli caught him, beat the hell out of him, and actually killed him.

[Shahal] You know more than I do. We have not yet confirmed those details. Therefore, it would be irresponsible on my part to comment on something about which I have no accurate information from an authoritative source.

[Engel] Could you tell us what is going on now in Hebron? We understand that serious riots erupted there in the wake of the incident.

[Shahal] There is a great deal of tension. Consequently, I call on the entire Arab and Jewish population to evince restraint and not to succumb to any provocations on either side. We have experienced the murder of Jews at the hands of Arab terrorists. Unfortunately, we are faced with an incident whose specifics are not yet clear. A measure of restraint will serve those who want to uphold the peace and save human lives. The security forces, the IDF, the Border Police, and the Israel Police are prepared to deal with the incident. To repeat, all these bodies are in constant contact to prevent a deterioration of the situation in the wake of this horrendous act.

[Engel] Has the prime minister been briefed on the details of the incident?

[Shahal] Absolutely, he is being briefed all the time. All the pertinent elements are being briefed almost in real time.

[Landau] Are you contemplating the possibility of declaring the area a closed military zone?

[Shahal] I cannot answer this question, which is being dealt with in ongoing consultations. We must first check the incident to ascertain exactly what happened.

[Engel] Minister Shahal, thank you very much.

'Political Establishment' Condemns Event

TA2502075294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] The entire spectrum of the Israeli political establishment, both right-wing and left-wing parties, have condemned the bloodshed in Hebron. Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer called on Yasir 'Arafat to take steps to calm the Arab public and not inflame passions. Ben-Eli'ezer called for the rapid separation of religious fanatics from both sides, noting that he feared that there were additional extreme right-wing lunatics who were capable of perpetrating such deeds.

Minister 'Uzi Bar'am said that whoever was responsible for this crime, which put the Jewish people to shame, would receive their just comeuppance in witnessing the rapid promotion of the peace process and the division of Eretz Yisra'el between the Palestinian and Jewish peoples. Minister Ya'ir Tzaban said that if any connection is proved between the shooter and the Kahana Hay organization or the Committee for Security on the Roads then immediate action must be taken to legally ban these organizations.

Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said that the way to fight Arab terrorism is not through waging Jewish terrorism, which is totally unacceptable. Tzomet Chairman Refa'el Eytan said that the criminal behavior of the shooter is a mortal blow to the settlers in Judaea,

Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Knesset Member [MK] Ra'anan Kohen said that this serious incident necessitates the immediate convening, even today, of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi condemned the murder of innocent people in Hebron. The reactions of the political establishment were reported by our correspondent Hayim Hecht.

Tzvi Katzover, the head of the Qiryat Arba' local council, said that the vast majority of Qiryat Arba' residents condemn the massacre and are shocked by the murder of innocent people.

Housing Minister Interviewed

TA2502072994 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0605 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Telephone interview with Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer by Itay Engel; place not given—live]

[Text] [Engel] What is your reaction to this morning's grave incident in Hebron?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] It was a very grave incident. I sharply denounce the attack. It came not only at the wrong time, but it could lead to the situation getting out of control unless the following conditions are observed: All the security forces, especially the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], must show maximum determination and control on the ground. There is no room for mercy to anybody. In this situation, there are two possibilities: Either we immediately clamp down on everybody or there is havoc. At the same time, the IDF, the security forces, and the political echelon, must and can bring about steps to calm down tempers. I reiterate my long-term conclusion that when extremists on both sides—and this time religious extremists—live together, such a situation is inevitable.

[Engel] This incident is not linked to the IDF's action in the field. We understood from Qiryat Arba' local council head Beni Qatzover that the assailant was mentally unstable, at least lately, yet he had weapons and plenty of ammunition which he could use whenever he felt like it. How can the security forces or the political establishment cope with such a situation?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I heard Qatzover saying that the man was mentally unstable. It is a shame that we found out about that after he murdered others and committed suicide. I think that political and municipal officials have to cooperate with the authorities, despite all the difficulties involved, to prevent crazies from carrying weapons. There are extremists in the territories belonging to very extreme movements who are no less dangerous than that crazy man.

[Engel] How will this grave incident influence the negotiations with the Palestinians?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] It will definitely not contribute to the talks.

[Engel] Was Israel in touch with the Palestinians this morning?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I have not had any contacts. It is possible that others have. I think contacts are vital and coordination between the two leaderships is critical. I would welcome such moves. We must remember that we are in the midst of the Ramadan fast, which will bring the entire Islamic world up in arms. How can we go and tell them that a crazy man was responsible? We must not ease up our control on the territories and our efforts to return calm through talks and actions.

[Engel] We understand that the prime minister plans to convene the Inner Cabinet.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I think that is the right thing to do.

[Engel] Can you tell us what you think it will decide?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] No, I cannot. I am no prophet. I can only say one thing: We do not have any interest in bringing about an escalation of the situation. Our only interest is to restore calm. We are not going to war against either side. In my view, it is a grave escalation of the situation because if whoever did it is crazy. It is something you have no control over unless as I said, people cooperate. I believe that any decision made will be aimed at controlling the situation and restoring calm.

Central Command Head Comments

TA2502101194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0815 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Interview with Major General Dani Yatom, commander of the Central Command, by reporter Gil Litman and other unidentified correspondents, in Hebron—live]

[Text] [Litman] General, can you tell us what happened in the Cave of the Patriarchs this morning?

[Yatom] A very grave incident occurred in the Cave of the Patriarchs this morning. We are still holding debriefings. I came here to investigate with the other commanders. What we know at this moment, which is not everything, is the following: At about 0530 this morning, a Jewish resident, an Israeli citizen, entered the prayer hall in the Cave of Patriarchs where several hundred Palestinians were praying, opened fire in all directions with a Galil rifle, killing a number of Arab worshipers, and wounding others. Later, he apparently committed suicide by shooting himself.

As I said, the event is extremely grave. It is an horrendous act by an armed man at a group of absolutely innocent worshipers. I would like to take this opportunity not only to denounce what happened, but also to express my condolences to the families of the fatalities and to wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

[Litman] General, do you know what the current situation in Hebron is? We are receiving reports about disturbances not only in Hebron but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and about additional Arab casualties due to IDF [Israel Defense Forces] fire following many stoning incidents and riots. Can you confirm this?

[Yatom] That is inaccurate. In Hebron, there are no disturbances at the moment. I am not saying there will not be any, there might be later on, because the Arabs are in a state of high tension. We are sending forces into the area in order to restore calm as much as possible. To that end, we imposed a curfew on Hebron city. There are attempts in several other places in Judaea and Samaria to disturb the peace. IDF and security forces are being sent in to prevent disturbances. There are no additional casualties among the Arabs. A Palestinian in Hebron hurled a firebomb at a member of our forces a few minutes ago. He was shot in the leg, wounded, and captured.

[Litman] General Yatom, what can you tell us officially about the number of fatalities in the Cave of Patriarchs massacre?

[Yatom] I do not have an official count. The number of fatalities is 10, 16, or even more. Neither we nor the Palestinians have yet succeeded in counting the number of fatalities and making a full report on the number of casualties. I hope the figure will be as low as possible.

The act was the initiative of a single person who carried out a despicable act by shooting at an innocent crowd. I can understand the outrage among the Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria. I cannot agree to disturbances. I do not think a new situation has been created. We will take action to restore calm and to make sure there are no disturbances.

[IDF Radio's Netan'el Semrik] Did the Israeli assailant operate on his own?

[Yatom] The Israeli acted on his own, and as things appear now, it was the initiative of one man. I do not know what happened to him, but there is no doubt that it was the act of a crazy man. We increased protection on the Palestinian and Jewish populations in the Hebron and Qiryat Arba' vicinities. I did not recommend in the past and I still do not recommend that the Jewish public avoid travelling. I would like to say what I said in the past: Whoever has to travel on Judaea and Samaria roads in order to do whatever he thinks he has to do, can do so. We will provide the necessary security, especially in this area.

[Unidentified correspondent] We have different figures on fatalities.

[Yatom] You have data, and I have data. I do not know if information is accurate. I very much hope that my reports are correct and yours are inaccurate. I cannot promise anything. I checked after some of them were published in the media. We gave clear instructions to the forces to avoid as much as possible opening fire on disturbers of the peace or on crowds. The order is to open fire only if the lives of soldiers and security forces are endangered. In all other cases, the instructions are clear, and unequivocal: Do not open fire. We will disperse the disturbances and demonstrations using other means.

[Litman] General Yatom, will you change the orders in the Cave of the Patriarchs, a sensitive location, where Jewish and Arab worshipers pray together?

[Yatom] Jews and Arabs have been praying together at the Cave of the Patriarchs for many years. The prayer arrangements permit both the Jews and the Muslims to express their religious feelings. The prayers sessions there are definitely complex because the prayers often take place simultaneously—in different halls, but at the same time. There is no doubt that this is a charged place. I do not know if in the wake of this grave action we will have to issue new instructions. The risk is that friction between Jews and Arabs will break out due to close contact between two groups of worshipers. This danger has been with us for many years.

[Corespondent] General Yatom, were there IDF soldiers in the Cave of the Patriarchs during the bloodbath, and should the instructions be changed so that only unarmed people enter the cave?

[Yatom] IDF soldiers were in the vicinity of the Cave of the Patriarchs this morning, as they always are, since an IDF force has been deployed at the cave for many years and its job is to safeguard the place, especially externally. The prayer arrangements permit the Muslims and Jews to enter, often at the same time. For many years, the Israeli worshipers have entered the Cave of the Patriarchs with their weapons. We make sure that the weapons are emptied of their ammunition. There is no doubt that we will have to review the situation. I cannot say whether following the review we will issue new instructions.

I would like to add that we offered all our assistance to the Palestinians in this grave incident. At one stage, a request was made to provide helicopters to transfer some of the gravely wounded Palestinian casualties to hospital. I approved it immediately, but the Palestinians withdrew their request. They preferred to evacuate them in a different way.

[Litman] General, you are also the prime minister's defense secretary. Did you report to him on what happened in Hebron and can you tell us what is happening in other areas of Judaea and Samaria, which are under your authority?

[Yatom] I am now the Central Command's commander and I report to the prime minister only via the chief of staff. As I have said, except for reports about disturbances and riots in the Bethlehem area, I have no other reports, which means there are no other disturbances. In reference to the assailant, his identity is known to us. I

can say that he entered the place wearing an IDF uniform with his rank insignia from the reserves. He is an officer in the reserves.

[Correspondent] General, in the General Staff and Central Command consultations will a decision be made to sharpen the divisions between the Jewish and Arab public, to impose curfews, and perhaps even a closure?

[Yatom] I do not want to go into these things now. As I said, this event will force us to study the present arrangements, especially where Jews and Arabs coexist. We will study the issue and then act.

Israeli Arabs, Druze Condemn Event

TA2502121394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In the Israeli Arab community, all events planned for the Ramadan festival are being canceled. The Druze leadership held a special session this morning and sent out a cable denouncing the massacre in Hebron. Israeli Arab leaders have scheduled a special meeting this afternoon at Shefar'am.

'Violent' Clashes Ensue Following Hebron Attack

'Unspecified' Number Killed

TA2502051794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In Hebron, there have been violent clashes between Jews and Arabs at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. An unspecified number of Arabs were reported to have been killed and there is a report that a Jew was hit. There were reports of shots at the scene, but details are still sketchy. The area has been declared a closed military zone.

A resident of Har Hadar, north of Jerusalem, was seriously injured last night when stones were thrown at her car near Ramallah. She was taken by ambulance to Hadassah Hospital at 'En Kerem. The incident occurred when the car in which she was travelling encountered a stone roadblock near the village of Biddu. In a stone throwing incident near Tulkarm, two Israelis were lightly hurt when stones shattered the windshield of the Egged bus in which they were travelling. They were taken to hospital. Shots were fired at a vehicle bearing Israeli license plates near 'Imanu'el. No one was hurt and no damage was caused.

Four Arabs Killed

TA2502082594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] There is currently a tense quiet in Hebron. The security forces acted forcefully to restore order. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that four Arab residents were apparently killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire. Large crowds of Arabs rioted at the intersection of the road leading from Bethlehem to Bayt Jala. Large Army forces dispersed the rioters with gunshots. Witnesses to the incident told our correspondent Ron Nesi'el that four residents were injured. Two people suffered from gunshot wounds and two others were injured by inhaling tear gas.

A general strike is being observed in East Jerusalem. The Fatah organization has declared three days of mourning and a general strike in the Gaza Strike.

Arab residents are now throwing stones and rioting throughout Judaea and Samaria. There were serious clashes between local residents and the security forces on the Trans-Judaea highway, near the village of Tarqumiyah. In Hebron, the Border Police shot and wounded a youth who had thrown a firebomb at the policeman. The commander of the Border Police arrived in Hebron in order to closely follow Border Police operations in the area.

Riots Reported

TA2502121194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] There are violent incidents and riots by residents in numerous places in the territories. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that 28 residents were wounded in the Gaza Strip by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire. Fire was directed at an Israeli car and a Border Police patrol in Bethlehem. The car was damaged, but its passengers were not harmed. A while later, an Israeli bus was stoned, and one of the passengers fired his gun, killing one of the stone throwers. The IDF imposed a curfew on the Bethlehem area.

Stones were hurled at cars in the garages in Nazareth. Calls were heared from the town's mosques not to forgive the massacre. The commander of the police's northern district conferred with area notables, expressed his sympathy for the Arab population, and tried to calm down moods.

The defense minister's media adviser denies Hebron physicians' claims that the IDF and Israeli hospitals refrained from extending aid to the Hebron casualties. He told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that the IDF offered helicopters for the transfer of the wounded, and that Jerusalem hospitals prepared to receive them, but the Arab physicians rejected all IDF offers.

The Health Ministry has deployed over the last hour to extend all possible medical aid to hospitals that treat the Hebron wounded. Our correspondent 'Ofra Nehmad notes that Dr Yehoshu'a Shemer, the Health Ministry's assistant director general announced that he instructed the blood bank to prepare as many blood units as necessary for the Arab medical elements, as well as to extend any other medical assistance. Our correspondent notes that seven of the Hebron wounded reached the Jerusalem Hadassah hospitals, and Magen David Adom ambulances are on the alert to transfer wounded people to the town's hospitals.

Worshipers Riot on Temple Mount

TA2502122694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpts] Muslim worshipers rioted on Temple Mount following Friday prayers and army forces are now dispersing the rioters. The Muslim worshipers first congregated near the Mahkama [court] building and hurled stones at the media, wounding a camerawoman. Stones were also thrown at the Western Wall compound and the Jewish worshipers were evacuated. Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that four policemen were lightly wounded in the Temple Mount riots.

There was also a riot near the Nabulus Gate by Muslims who had left Temple Mount prayers. They threw stones and bottles at the police forces and some of them were detained. Our correspondent Mira Amsalem reports that thousands of worshipers who left Temple Mount are now standing around the Nabulus Gate compound and refuse to disperse. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert set up an emergency headquarters in coordination with the security forces.

In Kefar Sava, a man was attacked with an ax, apparently by an Arab. He was transferred in very grave condition to Me'ir Hospital. The perpetrator escaped. Our correspondent Yafa Glick reports that the attacked man's revolver was taken from him. The police set up roadblocks and detained residents from the territories for questioning. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that during the clashes with the residents of the territories, a border policeman and three policemen were wounded.

Since the morning, there have been violent incidents and riots in many locations in the territories. Shots were fired at Israeli vehicles, and there were many stonings of Israeli vehicles by Arabs. In the wake of those incidents, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] imposed a curfew on Hebron and the Bethlehem area, and a closure on the Gaza Strip, but the IDF is trying to avoid unnecessary confrontations with the local Arab population. The IDF spokesman announced that the IDF has been beefed up in the territories.

Further on Riots

TA2502144294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] The man attacked with an ax in Kefar Sava, by an Arab apparently, died of his wounds, our correspondent Yafa Glick reports. The police believe that the motive of the murder was nationalistic and are looking for eyewitnesses. The assailant escaped, apparently with the attacked man's revolver.

Three more people were killed in the territories this morning in incidents with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that a youth was shot inside a mosque in Nabulus and two locals were killed in incidents in Gaza and the al-Burayj refugee camp. There is rioting in Nabulus and Gaza, as well as in the Jabalyah refugee camp.

Over 40 Gazans were wounded in rioting this morning. In Jericho and Ramallah, police stations were stoned and the IDF responded with fire and tear gas. In Jabalyah, a terrorist tried to throw explosives, but they blew up in his hands. Four border policemen were also wounded in the territories this morning. The IDF spokesman said the forces have been beefed up in the territories.

Thousands of Muslim worshipers are still congregated on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, and many of them rioted and hurled stones at police forces, the media, and the Western Wall. The police used tear gas to stop the stone throwing. Large police forces are concentrated around the Temple Mount to prevent the rioting from expanding. Seven policemen were hurt in clashes on the Temple Mount. Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that it seems that there are casualties among the Muslim worshipers on the Temple Mount. There was also a riot by Muslim worshipers near Nabulus Gate. These worshipers were eventually dispersed and some of them detained. Our correspondent Mira Amsalem reports that thousands are still congregated at the Nabulus Gate and are not going home.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert sharply denounces the Hebron murder. In an interview to Qol Yisra'el, Mr. Olmert called on Jerusalem's Arab residents not to be incited into acts of retaliation.

Qiryat Arba' and Hebron Jewish leaders conferred with the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip and issued a manifesto expressing regret for the Cave of Patriarchs murder as well as condolences to the families of the fatalities. The settlers hold the Israeli Government responsible for the action, but urge avoiding any harm to innocent people. In the meeting, the settlement leaders called on Major General Mufaz, the IDF commander in Judaea and Samaria, to step up the protection and safeguarding of Jewish residents in the territories. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports from Hebron that the town is generally quiet. The Cave of the Patriarchs has been closed.

The Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs is currently convened in a special session to discuss the situation. Prior to the session, Prime Minister Rabin had called for a special news conference in which he issued a condemnation for the murder in Hebron. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that Peace Now activists are demonstrating near the place where the committee is convened. They tried to break into the prime minister's bureau, but police forces pushed them back.

Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that commercial strike was declared in many Arab Galilee villages, and mourning processions took place in several of them.

Rabin Interviewed on Peace Process, Other Issues

LD2402210794 Lisbon RTP Internacional Television in Portuguese 1900 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by correspondent Paulo Dentinho; place and date not given—recorded in English with superimposed Portuguese translation]

[Text] The Israeli prime minister has granted an exclusive interview to RTP. Yitzhaq Rabin believes that the agreement with the PLO will be concluded within two months at most. He was speaking to Paulo Dentinho:

[Dentinho] Now that 'Arafat seems to be losing power to the radicals, are you not afraid that the future Palestinian police force might become a threat to Israel?

[Rabin] I was aware of that before. When we reach an agreement on implementing the first phase, starting with Gaza and Jericho, it will be a detailed agreement in which the two sides, Israel and the PLO, will set down their undertakings. I believe that it can be put into practice now, or within two months at most.

[Dentinho] One question about Jerusalem. The Palestinians, too, want the city for themselves. Do you believe Jerusalem will have a special status? Would you approve of two mayors for the city?

[Rabin] By no means. This matter will have to be negotiated, at most [as heard] two years after the implementation of the first phase of the agreement on Gaza and Jericho. So, instead of occupying myself with matters that are irrelevant at the moment—because it is the first steps that will decide the fate of the ultimate goal—we will instead focus on what must be done immediately and on what is laid down in the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

[Dentinho] Let us imagine that total peace has been achieved. How long do you think it will take for Palestinians and Israelis to forget 50 years of conflict?

[Rabin] The time has come to bring it to an end, to say enough is enough to the bloodshed, and to concentrate on changing the reality. I believe that the Israelis are willing to do so and to implement the agreement. I hope the Palestinians will honor their undertakings and do likewise.

Commentator Views Rabin's Long-Term Strategy

TA2002183694 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 20 Feb 94 p 9

[Commentary by Avner Regev: "A Few Musings Between the Interim and the Permanent"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The negotiating teams are dealing with the many issues as if nothing was wrong. Meanwhile, murderous attacks have become routine, one event after another, and warnings conveyed to various elements that the terrorist attacks have to stop have done no good; this will have to be solved in some way.

A military reaction, such as a closure on the Strip and the West Bank, is one of the options discussed today. The police minister and the chief of staff have openly discussed it. As far as the Palestinians are concerned, a hermetic closure will once again place Jerusalem—which will be severed from Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza—on the agenda. A closure on the territories, which would be parallel to the implementation of the agreement with the Palestinians this time, may create a situation in which autonomy will be implemented over the entire territory long before the timeframe envisaged in the original plan.

The current situation, in which tension in Lebanon rises daily and the security deterioration continues, will eventually affect the talks with the Palestinians. Top officials in Washington as well as Jerusalem have recently observed more than once that the prime minister is not particularly insistent on the Syrian issue, and with the exception of an occasional statement about his desire to advance the Syrian track, Rabin seems unconcerned. This, although al-Asad has not made the awaited declaration about the nature of peace.

The prime minister seems to be disinterested in launching substantive negotiations with Syria at this time, preferring to postpone them until after the implementation of the agreement with the Palestinians. Rabin is probably worried about the situation in Lebanon. His close circles speak of a possible conflagration in the north, in which Syria may be involved even in fighting on Lebanese territory. Some members of the top political echelons believe that without a limited military clash between Syria and Israel that is followed by massive American involvement, the sides will find it difficult to agree to dramatically advance the peace process by significantly ceding some of their present opening stands.

The katyusha which fell in western Galilee and all the ensuing media coverage, including the delay in the release of the fact itself, heralds the beginning of an attempt to gauge the tolerance of the sides to the conflict. The katyusha rocket had been fired from beyond the security zone, and it does not matter, therefore, whether it was launched by a Palestinian member of Hizballah affiliated with one of the rejectionist organizations, or any one of the other regional elements: After all, they are all sponsored by Syria. And Syria has proven before that its determination can prevent terrorist attacks as soon as it is displayed. That was the case in the weeks before the Clinton-al-Asad summit, and that was the case as long as the Syrians indirectly agreed to honor the understandings regarding Lebanon achieved in the wake of Operation Accountability.

The status of Jerusalem, which is likely to be discussed in the coming months, the preoccupation with the implementation of the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians,

and the situation in Lebanon all take Rabin back to his term as prime minister in the 1970's. At that time, post-Yom Kippur War interim arrangements were on the agenda. Those negotiations were also leisurely, with ups and downs. And just as now, only American pressure brought the agreement to fruition.

The prime minister is on the verge of critical decisions, but he may very well be unwilling to make them. That is probably the reason for his almost excessive insistence on security issues; he does not want to go down in history as the man who gave up Israel's security values. Furthermore, Rabin seems to be vacillating whether to take responsibility for an agreement that will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state and a total withdrawal from the Golan Heights, and he prefers at this stage to deal only with interim arrangements that will leave Israel in control of security and avert the need for a physical withdrawal from the Jordanian border. Gaza, in his opinion, could have been given up years ago. Similarly, his stand on the matter of the security arrangements on the Syrian border is that land concessions will necessarily involve a recognition of Syrian sovereignty in the Golan Heights.

Rabin does not seem interested in reaching permanent arrangements at this stage, and his stands sharply contrast with those of Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and his aides.

These prime ministerial vacillations make one muse about his political future. Is it possible that Rabin will end this term in office and not run for prime minister in 1996? Is it reasonable to assume that he prefers to leave well-secured Israel to his successor and not to commit himself to permanent arrangements? And perhaps the prime minister has also realized that soon he will have to discuss the issues of Jerusalem, the Palestinian state, and the Golan withdrawal, all of which will force him to agree to a geopolitical reality he repudiates. These are the reasons for his insistence—justified, from his vantage point—on interim arrangements that can stand on their own feet without a link with the permanent arrangements.

In any event, these impressions are prevalent among members of a limited group of Israel's top political-defense echelons with whom Rabin converses as equals.

Foreign Ministry Team Ends Talks in Russia

TA2202193694 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Feb 94 p A5

[Excerpts] Russia has been trying to persuade the Arab countries to evince flexibility and moderation in the peace process with Israel. Political sources in Russia believe the message President Boris Yeltsin sent last month to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad prior to his summit with the U.S. President in Geneva contributed to the moderation displayed by the Syrian president.

Officials in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told an Israeli Foreign Ministry delegation, which was in Moscow last week to hold political talks, that they share the assessment that the progress made in the Middle East peace process was irreversible but hard to accelerate.

The Russians believe there has been a positive change in al-Asad's positions, which was reflected in his statements in Geneva, but would not say whether they thought al-Asad would agree to a full normalization in relations with Israel in the context of a peace settlement. Neither would they reveal the contents of Yeltsin's message to al-Asad. [passage omitted]

The Israelis were impressed that the Middle East is important to Russia because of its proximity to its borders and the threat of instability there. The Russians stressed their role as cosponsors of the peace process alongside the Americans, and came out in favor of upholding the format of the Madrid process.

The Russians are worried by Muslim fundamentalism and fear it might spread to the Central Asian republics and Muslim regions in Russia. They agreed with the Israeli assessment that this fundamentalism can hardly be curbed if the economic and social situation in the Muslim countries does not improve.

The Israelis voiced their concern about the sale of Russian arms to the Middle East. The Russians said the Arab countries still owe them large sums of money for weapons supplied in the past.

The bilateral agreements on cultural and economic cooperation whose signing has been held up for about a year were discussed in the talks. The Russians are opposed to the Israeli demand to note in the agreement that the joint committees will meet alternately in Moscow and in Jerusalem, and argue that in their capacity as cosponsors of the peace process they cannot sign an agreement that recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The Israeli officials believe a formula will soon be found to settle the argument and proceed to sign the agreements.

In a meeting with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres last weekend, Aleksandr Bovin, Russia's ambassador in Israel, noted the need to accelerate the signing of the bilateral agreements.

The Foreign Ministry delegation went to Russia to exchange views and assessments about the situation in the Middle East and the CIS, in keeping with the cooperation agreement the two ministries signed about a year ago. The Israeli delegation consisted of Yo'el Sher, assistant director general in charge of the Eastern Europe Department; Yo'av Biran, assistant director general in charge of peace affairs; Uri Bar-Ner, assistant director general in charge of the Cultural and Scientific Department; Meron Gordon, director of the Eastern Europe I Division; and representatives of the Center for Political Research and the Political Planning Department. The political meetings were also attended by Hayim Bar-Lev,

Israel's ambassador in Moscow, Councillor Alex Ben-Tzvi, and other embassy staffers.

The Israelis conferred with two deputies of the Russian foreign minister, officials in the Middle East Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; with Yegor Gaydar, a former deputy prime minister and the current leader of the Reformist Party; and with Yegor Lukin, chairman of the Russian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. The delegation also toured academic research institutes dealing with the Middle East.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry gave a positive grade to the visit, which reflected the openness and normalizations in relations with Russia.

IDF Kills One Hamas 'Terrorist' 24 Feb

TA2402194694 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1930 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] A terrorist from the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam organization has been killed and another terrorist was wounded and captured in a protracted shoot-out with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers which started this morning. The incident took place in the village of Abu-Dis near Hebron.

The terrorists belonged to a squad which is responsible for the murder of eight Israelis: Shin Bet agent No'am Kohen, IDF soldier Tziyon Alqobi, and Israeli citizens Mordekhay and Shalom Lapid, Eli Levin, Me'ir Mendelovich, Shalva Ozana, and Yitzhaq Weinstock. May they all rest in peace.

National Health Insurance Bill Examined

TA2402205294 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 24 Feb 94 p 2

[Text] The Private Bill—The proposal which was approved at its first hearing yesterday before the Knesset is composed of three private members' bills: 1) The proposal prepared by Likud Knesset Member [MK] Dan Tikhon, which is an exact copy of the government's previous proposal known as the [former Health Minister Hayim] "Ramon Bill"; 2) The proposal prepared by Labor MK Yoram Lass, which includes the amendments made with respect to the linkage and collection of medical insurance dues, as agreed upon at the Labor party convention; 3) The proposal made by MK Hayim Oron and MK Ran Kohen, both from the Meretz party, which permits a unilateral linkage between a labor union and Kupat Holim [nation wide sick fund and health care system] (the Histadrut trade union could obligate its members to be insured at Kupat Holim, but could not force pe[]ple insured in the sick fund to become members of the Histadrut), contrasts with the position adopted at the Labor party convention which permits bilateral linkage. The system for collecting health tax in this proposal follows the "Bayga [nickname for Finance Minister Avraham Shohat] compromise," according to which the National Insurance Institute will be in charge of tax collection, but Kupat Holim will be able to collect a "welfare" tax from its members, which will stand at 0.8 percent of the insured person's earnings.

Following the Labor party decisions, the two alternative bills were brought before the joint health committee and Labor MK 'Amir Peretz decided to renew the legislative process. Labor MK Yoram Lass' proposal was attached to the two other bills. Peretz refused to coordinate legislation with the government, despite knowing that it too was about to reinitiate the process, and although he was asked to withhold his bill.

Peretz claimed that the government was not entitled to impose its will on the Knesset and invited government representatives to sit in on the committee's legislative proceedings, which, as earlier mentioned, had noted down the Labor party's position. The committee went on to consolidate the three proposals into one bill, which stipulated three options in clauses 4 and 16, pertaining, as mentioned above, to the issues of linkage and collection.

The Government's Bill—this is the earlier bill (the "Ramon bill," with amendments to the clauses on linkage and collection, as decided upon by the Labor party. Last month, the government pulled back the bill after it was brought before the Knesset for its second and third hearings, while promising to resubmit it to the Knesset plenum after the Labor party convention reached a decision on the controversial clauses. Last week, the government, with the objection of the Meretz ministers, adopted the revised version of the bill, and is going to bring it before the Knesset next week in order to ask for the Knesset's approval to resubmit it to the health committee, in order "to operate" on the two above mentioned clauses.

[Minister] Shahal's "trick"—Moshe Shahal, the minister liaising between the government and the Knesset, claimed that he had found a way to neutralize the private bills and restore the government's bill, which had been pulled back last month, to its progressive stage in the legislative process (second and third hearings before the Knesset plenum). According to the plan, Shahal was supposed to announce to the Knesset that according to clause 133 in the Knesset regulations, the government wished to resubmit the bill for a second and third hearing, and after this request was approved, to ask, according to clause 127 in the Knesset regulations, to withdraw the bill so that it could be amended by the health committee. Al these announcements must be voted on and approved by the Knesset plenum.

That is why Shahal informed the Knesset last week that he had placed the government's bill before the Knesset. Shahal believed that using the regulations would enable him to remove the private members' bills from the agenda, because when dealing with the same issue, a bill submitted by the government has priority. However, the government's legal adviser to the Knesset ruled that this rule applies only when the government's bill is submitted

before the private one. Therefore, there was no obstacle to presenting the private bill for its first hearing.

Moreover, Shahal and the leaders of the Labor party were unsuccessful in mustering a Knesset majority to support clause 127. Their fear was that if the plenum approved the request to return the bill for its second hearing (clause 133), but turn down the request to return the bill to the committee for amendments (clause 127), the Knesset could simply continue with the second and third hearings, and, in the absence of a majority, it may approve the law in its original form without the health committee's amendments. That is why Shahal refrained from submitting his proposal until Prime Minister Rabin returns from abroad. Rabin is supposed to use his influence on SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] and Meretz in order to canvass a majority for clause 127. Only after the bill is brought before the committee will efforts start to guarantee a majority for the government's position on the actual contents of the bill.

This effort seems impossible today, and senior Labor party officials are taking into account the possibility of being forced to accept the "Bayga compromise."

"The Bayga compromise"—This stipulates, as does the Labor party proposal, a bilateral linkage between the Histadrut and Kupat Holim; however, like the "Ramon" proposal it stipulates that the collection will be carried out through the National Insurance Institute. Each Kupat Holim organization will nevertheless be permitted to collect an employee welfare tax which will total 0.8 percent of the employee's income and to transfer this tax to the Kupat Holim management.

The compromise prepared by Finance Minister Avraham Shohat on the eve of the Labor party convention was rejected by the Histadrut.

Prime Minister Says Hebron Attack 'Unprecedented Crime'

JN2502115194 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Jordan has denounced the criminal act that was carried out by one of the settlers against innocent Muslim worshipers at the Ibrahimi Mosque in the occupied city of Hebron at dawn today. Hundreds of Palestinian citizens were murdered or wounded in this act.

In a statement to the JORDAN NEWS AGENCY, Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali described what happened at the Ibrahimi Mosque as an unprecedented crime, and as an indication of fanaticism, extremism, and lack of respect for human rights and sanctities.

Dr. al-Majali said that this criminal act constitutes a huge obstacle on the road to achieving a just and comprehensive peace, which Jordan has been tirelessly seeking to achieve. He stressed the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and for the removal of settlements as a guarantee to prevent the recurrence of such criminal acts that are in conflict with all humanitarian and religious values.

Dr. al-Majali said: At this time, when our region is witnessing immense events, we are in a dire need for a unity of stands and ranks on the Arab and Islamic levels in order to be able to confront challenges.

In his own name and on behalf of the Jordanian Government, Dr. al-Majali extended condolences to the Palestinian leadership and to our people in the occupied territories. He said: We consider the misfortune of our people in Palestine as our own misfortune.

Foreign Affairs Minister Comments

JN2502120894 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] In a statement made earlier today to Jordan television's live program "Good Morning Jordan," Talal Sat'an al-Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs denounced the painful, criminal incident in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

[Begin al-Hasan recording] First of all, I wish to express the Jordanian Government's strong condemnation of the criminal massacre committed this morning against innocent, unarmed Palestinian citizens inside the Ibrahimi Mosque, a house of God, and one of the most sacred places for the Muslim nation. This condemnable crime, committed against worshipers in the middle of Holy Ramadan, has shaken us and every single Arab, Muslim, and individual in the world. It should not be allowed to go by as a passing incident. The world must view it as a result of the arming of fanatical settlers. Jordan has always warned against the serious consequences that arming settlers would have on the peace process. Israel, the world, and the international institutions must bear their responsibilities and immediately act to end the settler's terrorist acts. This, of course, means that, first, these criminals must be punished and disarmed to prevent such incidents in the future; this includes even removing the settlements all together from the occupied Arab territories.

As we extend to our kinsfolk in occupied, steadfast Hebron, and to the families of the martyrs our warmest condolences, we in Jordan warn the world that this incident and several others in the past only exemplify the consequences of the occupation of the Palestinian territory and the prevention of the Palestinian people from exercising theirs right on their soil. The world must bear the responsibility for stopping these incidents by ensuring the achievement of an honorable, comprehensive settlement that will lead to Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and granting the Palestinian people their legitimate rights. [end recording]

Senior Officials Deny Cabinet Reshuffle Planned

NC2502082394 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Minister Hasan 'Izz-al-Din reports that President Ilyas al-Hirawi has announced that the question of a cabinet reshuffle has not been discussed and that regional and domestic circumstances do not permit this issue to be discussed now.

Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri yesterday denied for the second time in two days that there will be a cabinet reshuffle, noting that reports about this matter are merely newspaper speculations.

Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr repeated an earlier denial that there will be a reshuffle of portfolios. He explained that although there are certain reservations about the level of performance in some ministries, this does not necessitate a reshuffle.

Sources close to the prime minister told the newspaper AL-NAHAR that those who spread rumors about a cabinet reshuffle are seeking to achieve two things: First, to provoke a dispute between the prime minister and the Chamber of Deputies speaker; and second, to provoke quarrels between the prime minister and the ministers and also among the ministers themselves. The sources noted that such quarrels would paralyze the government and undermine the current cooperation between the government and the Chamber of Deputies over the passing of laws beneficial to the country's peace and reconstruction process.

Buwayz Comments on U.S. Extension of Travel Ban

NC2502090094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Excerpts] The decision made by the United States to continue the ban on travel to Lebanon for another six months is considered an initial success for Lebanon. A final lifting of the ban is expected in the coming stage. [passage omitted]

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that there is no justification for the decision to extend the ban either on security or political grounds, even though the decision contains some positive indications.

The U.S. decision to extend the ban on travel to Lebanon for only six months is expected to be the subject of consultations among President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Hizballah Leader Says Resistance Operations To Continue

NC2402182694 Paris AFP in English 1230 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Beirut, 24 Feb (AFP)—The head of the Iranian-backed Hizballah has accused factions within the government of stirring up trouble between his organisation and the Lebanese army as part of moves to halt anti-Israeli attacks.

Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah charged late Wednesday that factions which he declined to name were "executing a pledge made by the Lebanese government to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher."

Earlier this month, Christopher urged Lebanon and Syria to calm down the situation in south Lebanon after a Katyusha rocket attack on northern Israel, which was later claimed by Palestinian hardliners.

Hizballah guerrillas on 7 February killed four Israeli soldiers and wounded five in the bloodiest attack since August. Christopher said the violence could undermine Arab-Israeli peace talks, while Israel warned of a massive operation in south Lebanon following the rocketing and blamed Syria, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

"Resistance operations will continue (because) Hizballah's strategy is not part of any political consideration," Nasrallah said on al-Manar television, a channel owned by Hizballah.

Hizballah spearheads anti-Israeli attacks by Lebanese and Palestinian factions in south Lebanon, where Israel occupies a border strip. It opposes the peace talks and rejects any normalization of ties with the Jewish state.

The Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim fundamentalist group "is ready to confront the situation" if Syria and Lebanon sign a peace accord with Israel, Nasrallah said. "We are not only a military movement. We have popular roots everywhere. No one will be able to uproot us, no matter what happens," the Hizballah chief added. Nasrallah also stressed that Hizballah, which has eight MP's, was "trying to topple the government through peaceful means."

Its opposition dates back to September when soldiers opened fire on an illegal protest against the Israeli-PLO autonomy accord, killing nine Hizballah supporters.

The United States has repeatedly called on Lebanon to disarm Hizballah, the only militia allowed to keep its weapons since the end of the country's 15-year war in 1990.

'Security Sources' Warn Against Firing in South

NC2402124494 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1030 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Citing security sources in the border zone, our military correspondent reports that the Lebanese Army has recently allowed firing in areas under its control or areas adjacent to its deployment zone. The security sources affirmed to our correspondent that any shooting directed at us will be returned, and this will expose the Lebanese Army troops to the possibility of being hit. The sources added that the Lebanese Army must take this into consideration.

Afghanistan

President Meets Pakistan's Foreign Minister

LD2402181394 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, this morning received Pakistan's foreign minister, Sadar Asif Ahmad Ali. In the meeting, they discussed current issues and the need for the ensuring peace and security. Conversation and the exchange of views were also conducted on relations and cooperation between the two countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Rabbani expressed regret and sorrow at the incidents in the embassies of the two countries. The Pakistani foreign minister emphasized the expansion and consolidation of relations and friendly cooperation between the two countries. He also said that the incidents which occurred in the embassies of the two countries would not have any impact on the relations of Pakistan with Afghanistan. In the meeting, he expressed the readiness of that country to cooperate to restore peace and security in Afghanistan and said: We do not tell the Afghanis what to do, and we are ready, at any moment, to play any role we can to resolve the problems of Afghanistan. He also said: We envision taking some measures to send food to Kabul. The Pakistani minister of foreign affairs thanked Afghanistan's security officials for preventing embassy officials from being killed during the incident at Pakistan's embassy in Kabul. Asif Ahmad Ali, who arrived in Kabul yesterday afternoon, left for his country this morning. At the end of his visit, he expressed pleasure with the result of his meetings and visit and said: The incidents that have recently occurred in the embassies of the two countries will not cause any change in the previous status of Afghan refugees who live in Pakistan, and we welcome, as in the past, Afghan refugees as our guests as long as they do not return to their homeland.

Pakistani Envoy Meets Other Officials

LD2402195794 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Esteemed Hojjat ol-Eslam Abdol Ali Mazari, General Secretary of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, met yesterday with Pakistan Foreign Minister Sadar Asif Ahmad Ali. During the meeting, the two sides held talks on issues of interest and the current situation. Esteemed Professor Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, leader of the Islamic Union of Afghanistan, met with Asif Ahmad Ali. In the meeting, the two sides held talks on issues of interest. Esteemed Ahmad Shah Mas'ud also met yesterday with Asif Ahmad Ali. In the meeting talks were held on the current situation, relations between the two countries, and existing problems.

Rabbani Sends Message to Pakistan on Embassy Incident

LD2402192894 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] The press office of the presidency of Islamic state reported to Bakhtar Information Agency that esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has sent the following message to Sardar Faruq Ahmad Khan Laghari, president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on the incident of Pakistan's embassy in Kabul:

Your Excellency Sardar Faruq Ahmad Khan Laghari, president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on behalf of myself and Muslim Afghan nation, I am pleased to convey best wishes to your excellency, and through you to the fraternal nation of Pakistan. Your excellency, I would like to express my deep regret and sorrow at the incident which occurred on 23 February in your country's embassy—most probably at the instigation of self-seeking elements who seek to make fraternal and friendly relations between the two neighboring and Muslim countries tense. Your excellency, religious and cultural ties, and material and moral support of the nation and government of Pakistan on the uprising of the people of Afghanistan against foreign aggression and the granting of asylum to millions of Afghan refugees have so deepened and expanded our relations that the occurrence of incidents such as the aforementioned cannot damage our countries' religious and good neighborly relations. I take the opportunity to wish from the compassionate God your excellency's health, long life, success, and prosperity for the people of Pakistan.

[Signed] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Demonstrations Held Against Pakistan in Kabul

LD2402193994 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] By means of demonstrations, the residents of Kabul today strongly condemned the continued fighting and the closing of communication lines with Kabul, and asked that the United Nations, using its influence, bring pressure to bear on the enemies of the people of Afghanistan as soon as possible in order to open supply routes to Kabul. The demonstrators asked the United Nations to send more aid to the people of Afghanistan so that residents of Kabul can be rid of the famine caused by the putschist road blockers. Expressing repulsion and hatred at the acts of putschists, the demonstrators asked the United Nations to secure world aid to rid the people of Afghanistan of famine and hunger, which has been caused by the closing of the Torkham border post and communication lines.

Dostam's Forces Attack Kondoz; Extensive Losses Noted

LD2402201594 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] The infamous militia of the fiendish triangle today mounted a failed attack in Kondoz in which they, at the blessing of God and the battle of the Islamic Army, suffered a heavy defeat and extensive losses. The infamous militia, who attacked the area of Qotailich and kidnapped several people, faced the fatal blows of the ambush units of Corp No. 6, Brigade 54, and mechanized forces. The Islamic Army of Afghanistan entered the region and inflicted heavy losses on the militia. As a result of the blows, three pieces of mortar, three pieces of 82-mm artillery, 80 Kalashnikovs, 10 pieces of RPG8 and [words indistinct] desert artillery, and a ZK1 machinegun of the enemy have been captured by the Islamic Army of Afghanistan. [Word indistinct] of the invaders were captured, and 15 others, including two generals by the names of Gholam Rasul and (?Mohammad) Saleh, were killed. As a result of the counteroffensive and the heroism and bravery of the Islamic Army of Afghanistan, the areas of [words indistinct] were cleared of the militia.

Fighting, Rocket Fire Reported in Kabul 23 Feb

LD2402205794 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] By firing 20 rockets, the infamous militia of Karmal-Dostam-Golboddin murdered and injured a number of our compatriots last night. A source of the General Command of Kabul Garrison told a military correspondent of BIA that Karmal-Golboddin-Dostam's militia made last night the targeted 20 Saqar rockets at ward 11 of the city of Kabul. As a result of this savage act, six of our oppressed and innocent compatriots were martyred and 10 others were injured. The injured were quickly taken to hospitals and treated. In addition to the loss of life, much damage has been inflicted on the residents of Kabul. The rockets were fired from an eastern direction, which is controlled by Golboddin's men.

Iran

Foreign Ministry Condemns Hebron 'Massacre'

LD2502111294 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Following today's attack by the Zionists on fasting worshippers in the Tomb of His Holiness Abraham—may peace be upon him—in the occupied town of Hebron, martyring tens and wounding hundreds of Palestinian Muslims, the spokesman of our country's Foreign Ministry condemned this dastardly act, and said that the attack is another sign that the the policy of oppression and massacre is still in progress in the occupied territories.

According to the Central News Unit's report, the spokesman referred to this as a horrific massacre that was doubtless carried out with the backing of the military forces of the Zionist regime, and he called on human rights organizations and world public opinion to react seriously to this horrifying crime. He said: Silence and indifference of the countries supporting the Zionist regime will encourage that regime to continue its policies.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed the sympathy of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the families of those martyred by this horrific crime.

General Denies North Korea Testing Missiles in Iran

NC2402130494 Paris AFP in English 1021 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Tehran, Feb 24 (AFP)—Iran never has and never will allow North Korea to test missiles on its soil, the head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards General Mohsen Reza'i vowed in an interview published Thursday [24 February].

Speaking to the English-language daily Tehran Times, Reza'i denied Western reports that his country let the hardline communist state to test-fire a medium range missile in Iran.

"We are very sensitive to having our soil and military facilities used by foreigners," he said. "Iran will never opt for such cooperation no matter how friendly the countries are."

Western newspapers and several military officials have charged that North Korea would test the missile, named the Nodong-2.

Rezaie revealed Tehran had turned down repeated requests from Russia to sell it US-made F-14 jet fighters and wire-guided anti-tank missiles (TOW), "despite the enmity between Iran and the United States."

The Islamic republic also refused to deliver to the United States a Soviet-made T-72 tank, seized from Iraqi forces during the war, as requested by Washington "through various channels," he said.

The general denied as "rumor and baseless" Western charges that Iran tried to acquire nuclear weapons. "Political logic, moral concerns and world realities stop us from trying to have such deadly weapons."

Pyongyang, a main supplier of arms to Iran during its 1980-1988 war with Iraq, is suspected by the West of

offering to provide Tehran with 1,000 kilometers (625 miles) range Nodong-1 missiles, and to help in nuclear research.

Iran has repeatedly denied the charges, insisting that contacts between the two countries are limited to economic cooperation.

* Kazakhstani Embassy Inaugurated in Tehran

94LA0081F Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 2 Feb 94 p 6

[Text] Tehran, 6 Bahman [26 Jan] (IRNA)—The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan was officially opened in Tehran with the raising of the flag of that country in the presence of the ministers of foreign affairs of Iran and Kazakhstan.

Tuleutai Suleymenov, the Kazakhstani minister of foreign affairs, said during the embassy inauguration ceremonies, which were also attended by several foreign ministers of other Asian republics: With the opening of the Kazakhstan Embassy in Iran, mutual relations between the two countries in political, cultural, commercial, and economic areas will be actively expanded.

Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati also termed the inauguration of the Kazakhstan Embassy in Iran one of the fruits of the friendly relations between that country and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It is interesting that Myrzadai Zholdasbekov, the Kazakhstani Ambassador, submitted his credentials to President Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani last Azar 2 [23 November].

* Exchange Earnings Not To Exceed $10 Billion

94LA0081E Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 26 Jan 94 p 8

[Text] Tehran, 2 Bahman [22 Jan] [KEYHAN-E HAVA'I News Service]—According to the confirmation of all experts and the majority of Majles deputies, the foreign currency revenues of the government in 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995] will not exceed $10 billion.

Sa'id Leylaz, head of the public relations office and an expert of the Organization for Expansion and New Building of Iranian Industries, who spoke in the opening ceremonies of the Management Seminar for the Planning and Control of Cash Funds, made this statement and added: Hence, from foreign currency revenues alone, calculating 1,750 rials[R] to the dollar, the figures in the government budget proposed to the Majles will see a deficit of more than R6,600 billion.

He added: Also, tax revenues for 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995] have been projected at R6.4 billion. However, considering the decrease in revenues, at least R1 trillion of the projected tax revenues will not be attained.

Leylaz described a significant part of the proposed government budget for the government companies in 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995] to be questionable and said: Of the total R7,313 billion projected as banking loans to the government companies, about R5,630 billion (that is, 77 percent) is allocated to 15 giant government companies active in oil, natural gas, petrochemicals, steel, meat, and the Tavanir sectors, and the remaining R1,683 billion is set aside for about 2,000 other government companies.

* Chah Bahar Ready as Transit Point

94LA0081C Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 19 Jan 94 p 10

[Text] Chah Bahar, 21 Dey [11 Jan] (IRNA)—The director-general of the free commercial, industrial port of Chah Bahar announced: The free port of Chah Bahar is ready for the transit of goods to Central Asia.

Engineer Sami'i said: This port, with its numerous docks, at the present time can admit a million tons of goods.

In this connection, he invited the Iranian investors and merchants who are active in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait to come to the warehouses of the Chah Bahar free zone and procure the goods needed from this region.

The general manager of the Chah Bahar free zone said: Considering the suitable fundamental resources and the accessibility of Chah Bahar Port by way of asphalted roads from Zahedan, Mashhad, Sarakhs, and Central Asia, in the near future, it will be a major center for economic activities in the region, like Dubai.

Engineer Sami'i continued: In regards to the developmental activities in the Chah Bahar region, with the docks at their disposal, the existing warehouses and markets will continue their activities. The issue of land transfer in this region has also arisen, and so far a number of investors have built commercial offices and private warehouses.

He said: Also, in the Chah Bahar free zone, necessary permits will be issued to build warehouses, cold storage units, commercial centers, hotels, markets, and also various factories.

Concerning the investment conditions in this region, he said: There will be no restrictions in regards to commercial, service, and industrial activities in Chah Bahar. Moreover, various economic activities in this region will be exempted from taxes for 15 years.

The general manager of the Chah Bahar free zone added: The entry of raw materials, machinery, and any sort of permitted goods to the region will be allowed, and the regulations of the free zone will facilitate investment in the region, quite justifiably.

* Maragheh's Sahand Airport Operational

94LA0081B Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 19 Jan 94 p 10

[First paragraph is KEYHAN-E HAVA'I introduction]

[Text] Tabriz, 21 Dey [11 Jan] (IRNA)— The 40,000-telephone center of Maragheh has become operational. On the occasion of the anniversary of the prophethood of the revered prophet of Islam, the "Sahand" Airport of the city of Maragheh became operational.

During these ceremonies, in which the ministers of roads and transport, energy, and post, telegraph and telephone also participated, it was announced that the Maragheh Sahand Airport was built with 1.6 billion rials provided by the people.

This airport, with a 3-km airstrip, is capable of handling small passenger airplanes.

With the operation of this airport, the Maragheh-Tehran air route, with two flights per week, will soon be established.

At the same time, the 40,000-telephone center of the city of Maragheh was also inaugurated this week.

With the operation of this center, the number of telephones in Maragheh increased from 8,000 to 40,000.

This center is the first completely digital telephone center in Eastern Azarbaijan.

* More New Appointments Announced

94LA0081D Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 26 Jan 94 p 4

[Text] Hojjat ol-Eslam Qara'ati, the representative of the religious guardian and head of the Literacy Movement Organization, appointed Engineer Mo'ayyad deputy director of this organization.

In separate decrees issued by the head of the Plan and Budget Organization, Hushang Zamani was appointed director general of the Health and Treatment Affairs Office and Mahmud Bahramian as director general of the Financial and Logistics Affairs Office.

Upon the suggestion of the minister of culture and higher education and the approval of the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, Dr. Mohammad Ardabili was appointed president of the Khajeh Nasireddin Tusin Industrial University.

Upon the suggestion of the minister of health, treatment and medical education and the approval of the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, Dr. Mohammad Farhadi was appointed head of the planning group for medical sciences of the Supreme Planning Council.

* Various New Appointments Announced

94LA0081A Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 19 Jan 94 p 4

[Text] By decree, the grand leader of the revolution appointed Hojjat ol-Eslam Habibollah Mohammadian-Neyshaburi as his representative in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan and the Friday imam of Zahedan.

Engineer Mahluji, the minister of mines and metals, merged eight deputy positions of this ministry into three positions and, in separate decrees, selected Behruz Bushehri and 'Ali Kolahduz as logistics and parliamentary deputies for mines and materials of this ministry.

Pakistan

Embassy Staff 'Temporarily' Recalled From Kabul

BK2502093394 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0100 GMT 25 Feb 94

[Text] Pakistan has decided to temporarily recall all diplomatic and other personnel from its embassy in Kabul. The decision was made after miscreants attacked Pakistan's embassy in the Afghan capital on 23 February. The Pakistani consulates at Mazar-e Sharif, Qandahar, and Jalalabad will continue to function as usual. Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan told a Radio Pakistan representative in Islamabad last night that Pakistani diplomatic and other personnel have already left Kabul for home.

Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, who made a brief visit to Kabul to hold meetings with Afghan leaders on the establishment of peace in Afghanistan, met President Borhanoddin Rabbani yesterday. He apprised the Afghan president of Pakistan's decision to temporarily recall its diplomatic personnel. The Afghan president was told that the embassy building is now unfit for use, and the diplomatic staff can only fulfill their duties when arrangements are made for a suitable building and their security is guaranteed.

Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, who is actually in control of Kabul, has expressed his deep grief and anguish over the incident.

Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani has expressed his regret over the attack on the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul by some irresponsible people. In a message to President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, he said the attack was probably the work of vested interests that want to harm the brotherly relations between the two countries. President Rabbani said these relations have been further strengthened by the assistance extended by Pakistan during the Afghan war against foreign aggression. He particularly thanked Pakistan for providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of Afghans during this period. Meanwhile, speaking to APP in Kabul, the

Afghan president said he has ordered an inquiry into the incident, adding that those responsible will be punished.

Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, accompanied by the Pakistani foreign minister, visited the Pakistani Embassy to assess the damage. Meanwhile, seven rockets landed in the Afghan capital of Kabul yesterday. At least six people were reported killed and 10 injured.

Ministry Debates Temporary Closure of Embassy in Kabul

BK2402143794 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] The Senate today completed debate on the hijacking of a Peshawar school bus. Winding up the debate, Federal Interior Minister, retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar, said successful commando operation against the hijackers has saved the country from a national calamity. The minister said the government had no option but to resort to an operation against the hijackers who had refused to listen to any reason. Gen. Babar said the government had made it clear that it would not bow before any act of terrorism. Earlier, Mr. Abdur Rahim Mandokhel, Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Dr. Mohammad Rehan, Mr. Shahzad Gul, and Federal Minister for Special Education Dr. Sher Afghan participated in the debate on the bus hijacking.

In a written statement to the house on the attack of Pakistan Chancery building in Kabul by 100 people yesterday, the federal minister for law, justice, and parliamentary affairs, Syed Iqbal Haider, told the Senate that Pakistan was astonished that such a reaction had taken place in Kabul in support of the criminal act in which innocent children were taken hostage at gun point by three criminals. He said there was no cause for this reaction, particularly as the action against the three hijackers was taken in the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad with the consent and cooperation of the Afghan Government. The minister said this act of terrorism has been condemned by the Afghan president and prime minister.

Syed Iqbal Haider said the reaction of the demonstrators on the question of food supplies to Kabul was also irrational and unreasonable. The Pakistan Government had already donated and dispatched 32,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan during last year and was in the process of sending additional relief wheat as well as other goods to Afghanistan. The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, had only recently undertaken a humanitarian mission to Jalalabad to secure food supplies to Kabul through the ICRC by persuading Prime Minister Hekmatyar to open the route for relief convoys. Pakistan's borders had always remained open for the transport of relief goods. The route between Jalalabad and Kabul was an internal matter for the Afghan leaders. However, Pakistan was urging them to keep all internal Afghan routes open for humanitarian relief.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now going to consider the question of temporary closure of its embassy in Kabul and the issue of compensation for damage to our chancery. Decisions shall be taken after examining all possible aspects of our relations with Afghanistan. However, the Government of Pakistan will not allow the acts of criminals to undermine the close brotherly relations between the two countries.

Minster, Commander Comment on Events in Kabul

BK2402160094 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] Pakistan is considering closing down its embassy temporarily in Kabul following yesterday's incident there. Law Minister Syed Iqbal Haider in a statement in the Senate today assured the members that a decision in this regard would be made after reviewing all aspects of Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. He expressed the government's resolve that criminal activities will not be allowed to affect the close brotherly relations between the two countries. The law minister told the house that Pakistani foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, who is in Kabul, raised the issue to Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, who is holding military control over Kabul. Mas'ud expressed regret over the incident and inspected the embassy along with the foreign minister at midnight last night.

Military Exercises With Iran Continue

LD2402171394 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 24 Feb 94

[Text] With a visit to the port of Karachi by Iranian Navy personnel, who are participating in the first joint maneuvers between Iran and Pakistan, the maneuvers continued today.

The deputy in charge of cultural, propaganda, and defense affairs at the headquarters of the commander in chief, according to a report by Central News Unit, said that in the continuation of the joint maneuvers between Iran and Pakistan, the participating destroyers and submarines of the two forces carried out tactical practices of several submarines, communication operations, safety training, submarine operations, marine defense, damage control, and combat with marine fire.

Rockets Reportedly Fired From Across Afghan Border

BK2502114794 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 25 Feb 94 p 1

[Excerpts] Islamabad—In the wake of attack on Pakistan Embassy in Kabul, the government of Pakistan decided Thursday to temporarily close its mission in Kabul and withdrew all its diplomats and staff from the Afghan capital. [passage omitted]

Matters took a more serious turn later in the evening when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was informed by

the Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar that three rockets had been fired from Afghanistan into Pakistan at the Towr Kham border.

Afghans without visas attempted to enter Pakistan illegally during the dusk hours. There were also some skirmishes on Thursday evening when such attempts to cross over into Pakistan were made by Afghans. Of late, a shift in Pakistan policy resulted in the closure of its borders with Afghanistan, allowing only trucks loaded with goods allowed to go to Afghanistan and Afghans with visas to enter the country.

Three rockets were fixed at different targets: the Tourist Inn, an empty checkpost and a third at an unidentified target. However, there were no causalities.

Babar said, "The Afghan Government has been sent a clear message from us. We will have to take strict measures." [passage omitted]

'Dangerous' 'RAW' Agent Arrested Near Border

BK2402130694 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 16 Feb 94 pp 8, 7

[Text] Dhirke—A dangerous agent of the Indian terrorist organization, "Research and Analysis Wing [RAW]," was arrested as soon as he crossed over into Pakistani territory. It has been learned that Lakshman Das, a dangerous "RAW" agent, was arrested by a Pakistani secret investigation agency when he was entering Pakistani territory near Dhirke from India's Jaisalmer area. A large amount of Indian currency and some important documents have been recovered from the arrested terrorist. It has also been learned that Lakshman Das was coming to Pakistan after receiving training at a RAW camp in India's Bhilwara District to carry out terroristic activities in Sindh Province. During the interrogation, he identified certain important personalities of Pakistan, especially an influential Hindu businessmen from Sindh Province, who provided assistance, Pakistani currency, and arms to RAW agents to carry out acts of terrorism inside Pakistan.